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1941

# AMERICAN ★ ARTIST ★

*formerly* ART INSTRUCTION

DEC 30 1940



*Eliot O'Hara* paints a watercolor

The Art Magazine written by American Artists

# COLOR IN SKETCHING AND RENDERING

By Arthur L. Guphill

## ★ THE MOST USEFUL BOOK FOR STUDENTS OF WATER COLOR

We believe this to be the most complete treatise on the subject of water color and related media ever published—surely it is the most handsome one. Three full years were given to its preparation. It leads the reader step by step from simple to advanced considerations, each step being fully explained and graphically illustrated. There are over 250 illustrations in all—dozens of pages—and most of them in full color. These alone are worth more than the price of the whole. Numbered exercises are offered for the guidance of the reader.

Here are the contents of Part I. Part II places its main emphasis on the rendering of architecture and its setting and accessories.

## WATER COLOR PAINTING

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## BULLETIN BOARD continued

### Industrial Design Contest

#### Museum of Modern Art

The Museum of Modern Art, announces two design competitions for home furnishings.

*Competition I* is open to any resident of the United States except employees of the Museum. All entries must be postmarked no later than midnight Saturday, January 11, 1941, and must be submitted anonymously as directed in the program of rules and conditions for the competition. This competition is divided into nine categories; the winning designer in each category will receive an offer from a manufacturer to enter into a contract for the production of the winner's designs selected by the jury. Such contract will provide for payment of royalties or fees to the designer at the usual rates.

*Competition II* is open to any resident of the twenty other American republics of Mexico, South and Central America and the West Indies. All entries must be submitted anonymously and must reach the Museum not later than January 15, 1941. Each competitor is required to submit original drawings for a few pieces of furniture such as might be used in a living room, a dining room, a bedroom or an outdoor area. Winners will receive a round trip ticket to New York and \$1,000 for expenses during a three or four months' stay. At least three such awards will be made, and if sufficient ability is found through the competition, the jury may double the number of awards.

*Entry blanks* and printed program of rules and conditions will be mailed upon written request to: Eliot F. Noyes, Director, Department of Industrial Design, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City.

### Design a Candle

The Manhattan Wax & Candle Co., Inc., 200 Fifth Avenue, New York, is conducting a competition to secure new designs for candles for every occasion. Entries must be in by January 15. Prizes totalling \$150 will be awarded. Jury: George B. Bridgman, Karl H. Gruppe, Mrs. Rilla C. Alleman. Send your request for complete information to: Room 707, at the above address.

### Traveling Exhibits

The Division of Graphic Arts of the U. S. National Museum maintains six traveling exhibits illustrating the various processes of the graphic arts for the use of schools, colleges, public libraries, museums and other organizations that are interested in "How Prints Are Made."

Loans are made for a period of about one month; this includes shipping time. Express charges must be guaranteed by the exhibitor both from Washington and return, or to the next exhibitor. Exhibits must be displayed for the benefit of the public, with educational intent, and not for private gain.

For complete information write to: U. S. National Museum, Division of Graphic Arts, Washington.

### Lectures on Findings of the N. Y. World's Fair

The New York School of Applied Design for Women, 160 Lexington Avenue, New York, announces a lecture course which will review and study contributions of the New York World's Fair to the modern use of color, lighting, design and landscaping. The series will open on January 15, and will include among its lecturers: Richard Engelken, illuminating engineer and light consultant to the Board of Design of the Fair; Julian E. Garnsey, color consultant to the Board; Robert D. Kohn, member of the Board; Paul Manship, sculptor; Eugene Savage, mural painter; James W. O'Connor, architect; and Mrs. Constance Spry, expert on flower arrangement.



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# JANUARY

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### Ernest W. Watson—EDITORS—Arthur L. Guptill

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FISHING FLEET, JUNEAU, ALASKA + WATERCOLOR BY ELIOT O'HARA

*To demonstrate his painting methods Eliot O'Hara made a duplicate of this watercolor. A step-by-step photographic record of his procedure is found on the following pages*

*Eliot O'Hara is one of America's most eminent watercolorists and teachers. His work is widely known through exhibitions held all the way from Tiflis in the Caucasus to Puerto Montt, Chile, as well as throughout the United States. He is represented in most of our museums and in many private collections. His pictures have won numerous prizes. O'Hara is no less famous as a teacher; 1932 saw the founding of his school at Goose Rocks Beach, Maine, where as many as 175 students have been enrolled in a single season. This year he has opened a winter school in Tucson, Arizona. Mr. O'Hara's instruction has been made available to all through his books "Making Watercolor Behave," "Making the Brush Behave," "Watercolor Fares Forth" and "Art Teachers' Primer"; all published by Minton, Balch & Co. of New York*



# Eliot O'Hara paints a watercolor

Photography by Robert McAfee

Eliot O'Hara paints fast. He likes to complete a watercolor in a half hour—seldom takes more than three-quarters of an hour. "Your greatest enthusiasm," he will tell you, "is felt during those vital moments of your first attack. And your brush will respond accordingly. Your most personal expression comes with your keenest reaction to your subject. The more quickly you can record your impression the fresher and more effective it will be. And remember it's the last stroke that spoils the picture."

The student, looking over O'Hara's shoulder, knows of course that such technical mastery can be achieved only through long continued practice. But he will be aware, as he inspects the artist's equipment, that the proper tools and their efficient employment have a lot to do with it too.

That big flat varnish brush—two inches wide—is in O'Hara's hand a good bit of the time. A few strokes with it will cover a considerable area of sky and water. Then come the one-inch and one-half-inch flat sables. It is marvelous what he does with them; dragging them over the picture with the full length of hair lying on the paper; then in an almost vertical position; stroking with the thin edge; touching with just a corner. Rapid strokes give effects differing from those with slow strokes. Learning what a given brush will do for you is one of the first steps in learning to paint, as O'Hara effectively demonstrates in his book, "Making the Brush Behave."\* Drop into his summer school studio at Goose Rocks Beach, Maine, or his winter class in Tucson, some day, and you will see students covering sheet after sheet with this kind of brush practice.

Another brush in frequent use is a round sable (about No. 12), the one paired up with the knife. And that knife, by the way, is an amazingly useful tool, as is shown in the demonstration. The small brush is a No. 5 sable and the long-haired sable paired with it is a sign painter's "high liner," better known to artists as a "rigger."

That idea of attaching two brushes to a single handle is part of O'Hara's organization for rapid performance.

A list of O'Hara's tools would not be complete without mention of his fingers. They do some things for him better than

\* Minton, Balch & Co.

brushes. In painting a tree, for example, he will brush in a foliage mass, then with a fingernail dip into the drip of the wash as it settles in a puddle and lead it down to form small branches connecting foliage with trunk or larger branches.

Occasionally O'Hara has need for a razor blade. If—as sometimes happens with every painter—he has inadvertently covered up an important white accent, he will outline that spot with a razor blade and peel off the top layer of paper, laying bare the clean paper underneath.

The man has a hundred resources—call them tricks if you will—which you will have to learn from his books or, if you are fortunate enough, through studying with him in person.

As a teacher, however, he deplores over-emphasis on mere manipulation of brush and paint; since he contends that technics are mere means to an end and can be taught or learned as easily as the alphabet or spelling. The development of the creative and the critical faculty is the important and difficult mutual problem for the teacher and the student.

Perhaps the thing that surprises one most is O'Hara's palette and how he uses it. The compartments on one side are occupied with the standard saturated colors and those opposite with the six colors comprising the "O'Hara Neutralized Spectrum"—more about these later on. The compartments are kept well-filled with pigment, carried over from day to day. He does not clean his palette after painting and some of the pigment on it may have been squeezed from the tube weeks earlier. During a

painting season the pigments do not dry hard from day to day and even after an interim of several weeks it is only necessary to wet them when about ready for work.

On that palette note the very restricted free area left for mixing colors with the brush. It is hard to believe that from this small space O'Hara can paint a complete watercolor without once cleaning his palette. As a matter of fact he uses no paint cloth or sponge. He squeezes excess water from his brushes between thumb and fingers.

Water, he uses sparingly. Some



This knapsack, which O'Hara bought in Alaska, is prospectors' equipment. Similar outfits can be purchased from Abercrombie and Fitch in New York and in army stores



O'HARA NEUTRALIZED SPECTRUM		Cadmium Scarlet
	Red	Alizarine Orange
		Cad. Yel. Deep
	Orange	Cad. Yel. Pale
		Lemon Yellow
	Yellow	Viridian
		Monastrol Blue
	Green	Cobalt Blue
	Blue	Ultramarine Blue
	Violet	Alizarine Crimson

Eliot O'Hara's palette is about 6 x 12 inches. The diagram above itemizes the colors. The small palette is used for mixing grays made with black and white

painters have their palettes running with wet washes. O'Hara seems to use the minimum amount of water required to float the pigment, and does a great deal of the mixing actually on the watercolor itself. He never has an excess left in his palette. To know that a pint jar of water serves for an entire painting gives more than a hint of his method of handling color. The photograph of the palette, by the way, was made after the finish of his demonstration, and without cleaning. It looks exactly as it did before he started.

Until recently O'Hara, like most watercolorists, has used imported hand-made papers having a rough surface. Now he paints on a 4-ply medium surface Strathmore board or a smooth surface illustration board. This is heavy enough not to buckle and so does not require stretching. He is now teaching the use of these papers for he realizes that soon the time will come when dealers' stocks of imported papers will be depleted and artists will have to solve new technical problems imposed by machine-made surfaces. We cannot expect to see satisfactory substitutes for imported papers made in America. Their manufacture has been handed down from generation to generation. It is not a craft that can be learned quickly.

The necessity for changing to smooth papers does not dismay O'Hara. He feels that it is wholly a matter of learning new methods of handling pigment and the result should in nowise suffer. "Two of the chief advantages in smooth paper," says O'Hara, "are the subtleties or the brilliance of the colors shown on it. The

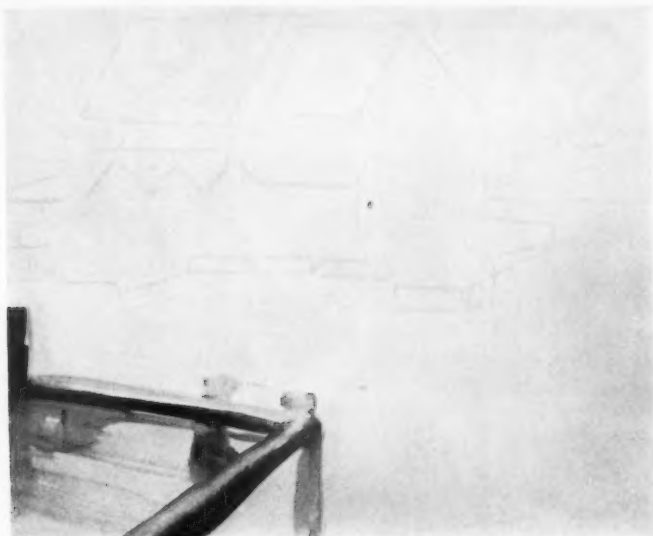
chief reason for this is that the light falls on a framed or matted picture either from the top or from one side. With rough-grained paper each lump, therefore, has a lighted side and a shaded side and sometimes even a cast shadow. You see the rough-paper picture, then, not in all its clarity of color as you do the smooth-paper picture, but you descry it as through a stippled screen of false light and shadow points."

Our cover picture shows O'Hara in a characteristic painting pose. It was taken in a studio, since an outdoor picture was not feasible in late October in New York City. Outdoors he would be wearing a hat and would be painting in the shade. Sometimes he sits on a folding camp stool, but he never uses an easel. He wants his paper horizontal or nearly so, although at times he tilts it this way and that to control the run of washes.

And now let us learn from Mr. O'Hara about his Neutralized Spectrum as he himself describes it.

### The O'Hara Neutralized Spectrum

For a time after the accidental discovery of finnan haddie in Scotland, fish houses of willow wood were burned down to produce the rare flavor that the willow smoke gave to the dried haddock. Soon, however, native thrift caused the Scotch to try a less lavish method. In the field of art similar shortcuts have gradually evolved. No longer does roasted earth from Sienna, Italy, produce the only "Burnt Sienna." Modern chem-



1

istry now artificially produces iron oxides and hydroxides to make pigments even better than the primitive colors.

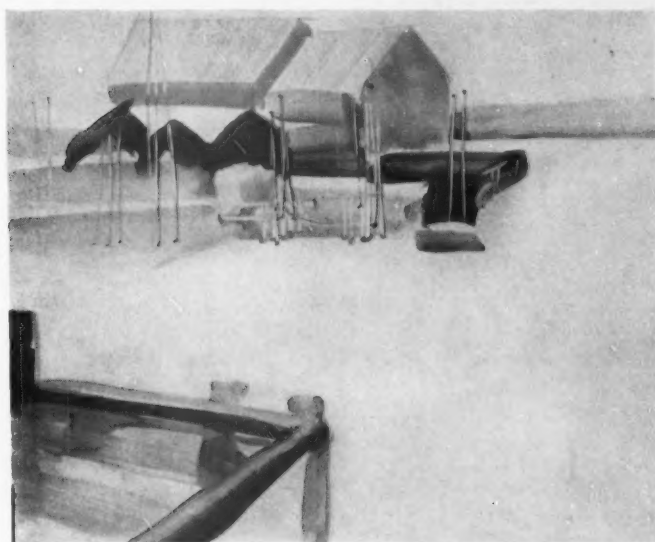
It is mostly habit which makes the painter still use earths (raw and burnt), the juice of the squid, and similar extractions just as they are found in nature rather than combine them with other natural or artificial colors which might more exactly suit his needs.

What are the needs of the watercolorist as concern pigments? Permanence is certainly one of the most important. To have a picture, upon exposure to light, turn into another picture not as good is damaging to the artist. Moreover, it harms the art of watercolor painting as much as crackling paint and blackening color harms the art of oil painting. The making of permanent pigments is the province of the manufacturing chemist or color man. While he may also make non-permanent pigments for certain purposes, they are usually designated as such and the artist does not need to buy them.

Next to permanence the artist desires brilliancy. Here giant strides have been made recently, not only in improving old formulae but in devising new ones. Alizarin colors have become more permanent. New replacing colors have been developed such as thalocyanine for Prussian blue and a mixture of thalocyanine with a permanent yellow to replace Hooker's

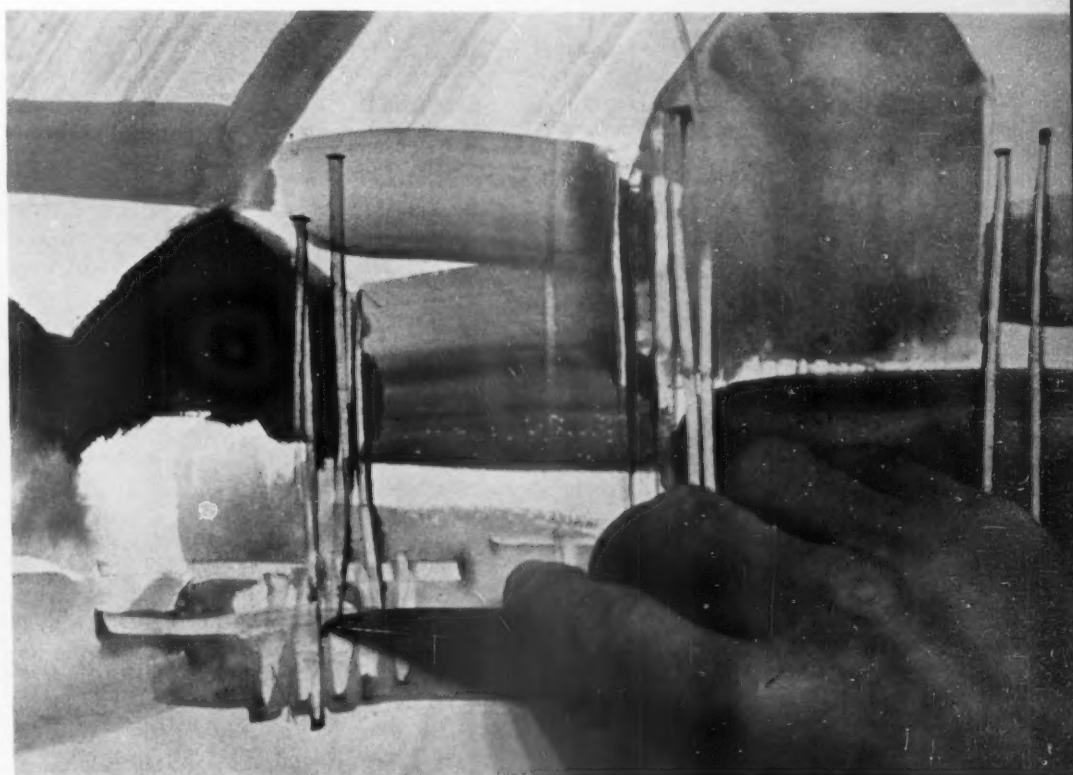
1 With his one-inch brush O'Hara began the painting in the foreground, washing in the wet dock but merely indicating the piles with light tone. Later, when painting the water, he could run the wash right over the piles, and darken the piles after the water areas dried

2 O'Hara organizes his procedure so that the strokes most likely to go wrong will be applied first. If they don't "come off" a new paper can be started with little time lost. In this subject the confused area of boats with buildings beyond was the most difficult, so was painted at the beginning, and that mass—all of the upper left corner—had to be done in one drying period (6 or 7 minutes) because he planned to scrape out the light masts before the background colors dried. The corrugated iron roofs were rendered with the flat one-inch brush, its hairs separated by squashing them into the palm of the hand



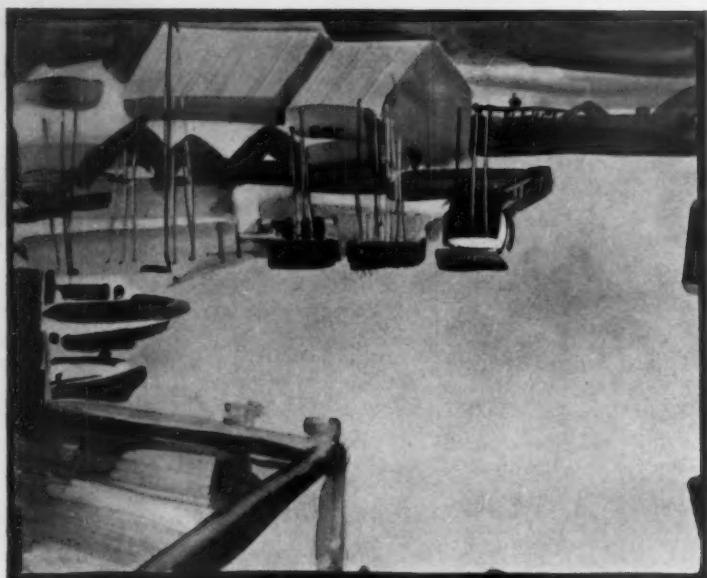
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3 This close-up shows O'Hara scraping the masts out of the background colors while they are still wet. The knife does not dig into the paper; it squeezes the color from the surface



3





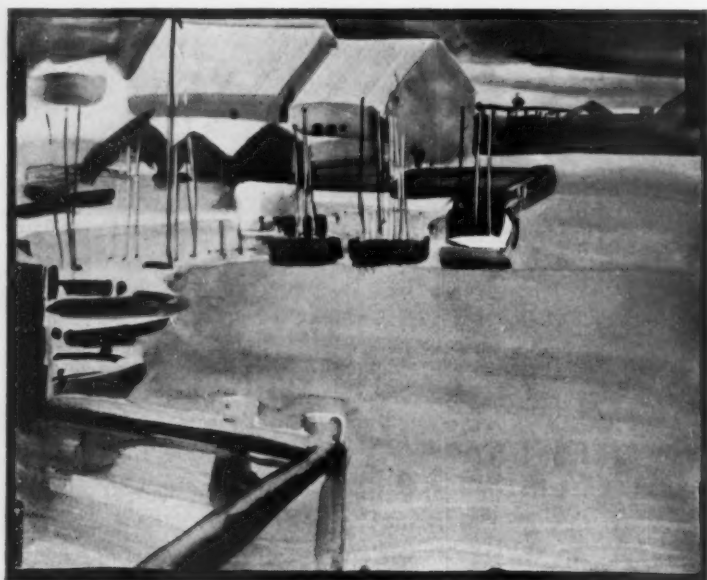
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4 Before painting the sky O'Hara moistened the areas (with a broad brush dipped in clear water) so that the purple cloud masses would flow on with proper distribution. While waiting for the sky to dry he brushed in the browns and blacks of the boats. Testing it with his finger, he waited until the sky had dried enough to give a relatively hard edge to the distant silhouette. The trestle, painted next, is nearer and the contour is expressed by a harder edge—painted when the sky had dried out more. The order of application is determined by the drying

5 With the two-inch brush merely wet with water from the jar O'Hara now dampened the entire surface of the water area, letting it overlap the distant silhouette in order to give a soft edge for the transition. The color was then flooded on with the two-inch brush and the board tipped slightly to permit the wash to run somewhat. The light wave-lines in the foreground were picked out with the rigger, slightly moistened with water

6 The water area was dry when the boat reflections were painted with the one-half-inch brush

7 All that remained to be done was to darken the piles and reflections in the foreground dock

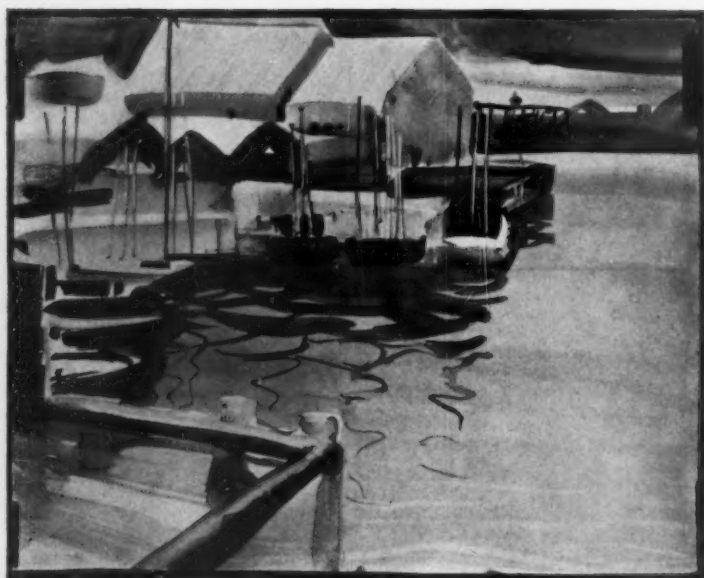


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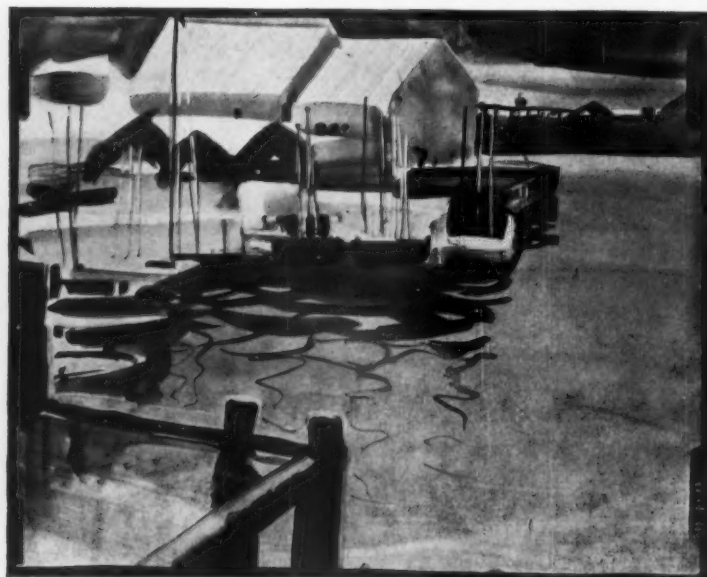
green. Manganese blue and alizarin orange are two more new brilliant colors. It is easy now to choose a brilliant spectrum of true colors which will mix well together. Not only one such set but many could be devised to suit any painter's prior habits or his affection for some pet color.

My brilliant palette is chosen for permanence, brilliancy and tinting strength and, for obvious reasons, favors the pigment primaries: red, yellow and blue.

While the brilliant colors — by their nature — are unmistakably of a certain hue, this is not true of the dull or neutralized ones. In neutralization the point where the painter most wants accuracy is the point where it is most difficult to distinguish one hue from another. Here a slight difference in staining power or tinting strength may cost the artist enough time to miss a drying period. His hand should be able to pick up two complements quickly and know that they will neutralize to absolute gray. But what do we find? We find a lot of brownish colors composed of various earths, and special purpose colors made by artists of the past whose problems were



6



7

American Artist



*"The Red Fish House" by Eliot O'Hara. From the artist's book "Watercolor Fares Forth"*

entirely different from ours, as to medium, purpose and intent. Van Dyck brown, Payne's gray, Davey's gray, Mars orange — all of them dulled colors, whether made with earth or animal matter — find their place in the spectrum by accident or through the needs of some master of the past. For years I have used them, learning my own tricks of mixing them. Meanwhile, I have wondered vaguely why nobody had organized these low-key colors on an orderly basis.

Recently I discovered why the color men had never armed us for the subtle quick mixing so necessary to the watercolorist. The answer was simple; they had never been asked. I had the temerity to suggest, last June, that one of the manufacturers put up in tubes a series of spectrum neutrals such as I had been mixing from various existing pigments. To use with my brilliant colors, I requested this from the chemist:

A series of neutrals — red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet — which must have the following qualities:

1. Absolute permanence in all mixtures.
2. Permanence to light.
3. Equal saturation.
4. Equal staining power.
5. A constant point in the spectrum for each color in all values.

6. Immediate and absolute production of gray, when complements are mixed.

The colors were manufactured for me by F. Weber Co., and are, perhaps, already being projected by other color firms. They are decidedly worth trying; here are some of their advantages:

1. For the average student they force restraint.
  2. For the expert they speed the quick mixture of grays, and facilitate subtle color relationships.
  3. They replace uncertain trial mixtures.
  4. They make a good prescription palette for those who have difficulty in differentiating red from green. Of these there are more, even among successful artists, than most people realize.
  5. They eliminate actual black from the palette; as any one of the six taken pure will count as black, but will have its own spectral flavor.
  6. They provide dilutants for the corresponding brilliant colors, quickly and surely.
  7. When used alone, they force the student, by denying him the use of full color, to achieve better values.
- While the three neutralized primaries, red, yellow, and blue, are, of course, the important pigments, the other three (secondaries) provide complements for each of the former and the quick pick-up so necessary to the watercolor painter.

# JOHN TAYLOR ARMS

*tells how  
he makes an Etching*

## PART 2

### DRAWING-ON and ETCHING THE PLATE

*Next month Mr. Arms will demonstrate printing*



*Arms draws upon grounded and smoked plate*

If the drawing that is to be made on the plate is at all a complicated one, it is helpful to have an outline on the ground to which to work. This involves making a "transfer." Before doing this, however, it must be remembered that the subject, in the print, will be in reverse from the subject as seen in nature, unless it is drawn in reverse on the plate. Let me emphasize the fact that, whether the subject is in reverse or not has nothing whatever to do with the artistic merit of the print. In the case of a portrait; a landscape, unless it contains objects of a generally known orientation; or an architectural view, again unless the direction in which a certain building faces is significant—it is not necessary to reverse the drawing on the plate. If, however, the orientation is really a part of the subject, so that it will offend us if the subject appears backwards in the print, the drawing must be done in reverse. How is this accomplished? In three ways: first, make the drawing on the plate from an image of the subject as reflected in a mirror; second, face the subject and make the drawing backwards; third, make a transfer upon the ground, in reverse, of the outline of the subject, and work to this. As for the first method, many artists, including myself, dislike working from a mirror; as for the second, it is perfectly possible to do it, with complete facility, after years of training. The third method is the one most commonly followed. The transfer may be made in a variety of ways, and every etcher has his own favorite one. In my own case I trace the main outlines of my subject—not all the detail—upon a piece of tracing paper. This tracing is laid face down

upon the grounded, smoked plate if the subject is to be reversed, face up if it is not. Between plate and tracing I slip a piece of rouge paper (from which most of the rouge has been rubbed), rouge side down, rouge paper and tracing being fastened down with thumb-tacks. I then go over whatever lines of the tracing I see fit, with a needle dulled so as not to tear the tracing paper. These lines will appear on the ground in sharp, distinct, red lines, and the outline, particularly in the case of a complicated subject, will be very useful as a guide.

Next, the etcher makes his drawing with the etching needle. For comfort in working, use a light screen. A simple one may be made by mounting a piece of tracing paper, or tracing cloth, on a stretcher, to stand, slightly tilted forward, on the table in front of the artist, with a light behind it. This filters the light and greatly facilitates drawing on the plate. It is essential that sufficient pressure be exerted to expose the copper wherever a line is drawn. If this is not done, or if the needle be too dull, a thin film of ground will remain over the lines, sufficient, if not to prevent the acid from attacking the copper, at least to retard it. Just the right amount of pressure is a matter of experience—it becomes second nature after much practice. On one point all the books on etching agree, namely, that just enough pressure should be used to lay bare the ground, the pressure in drawing to be uniform everywhere, and the depth of the line being achieved by the action of the acid. In theory this is perfectly true, yet it is as unreasonable to tell the etcher, "when you draw on the plate, be

sure you exert exactly the same amount of pressure in making every line," as it would be to tell the pianist to be very careful always to strike every key just as hard as every other one. When the etcher draws upon his plate he is speaking in the only language he knows, and he is creating, he is *not* going through a mechanical exercise. Thus, it is instinctive with him to press hard when he wishes to register accent, more lightly when he does not, varying the pressure with the emotion. This is the way he naturally draws, and this is the way he *should* draw upon the plate, remembering only that he must *at all times* employ sufficient pressure to expose the copper in every line he makes. By thus varying the pressure he will achieve a dual purpose; he will satisfy his creative impulse and he will actually scratch the copper in lines that are to be deeply etched and hence print strong. For the acid attacks the copper much more quickly and vigorously in a line that has been scratched *into* it than in one where the surface of the metal has merely been laid bare.

It will be observed, when the drawing on the plate has been completed, that all lines will have the same value. Variation in depth of line, hence variation in printing value, will be achieved by varying the length of time the different lines will be exposed to the acid. In other words, the modeling is done with the acid, not by the pressure of the hand.

The drawing being completed, the design must now be etched into the plate. One of two methods may be pursued, by immersing the plate in a tray filled with acid, or by brushing the acid on



with a feather or brush. In either case, if, when the drawing is completed, any part or parts of it are not satisfactory to the artist, they should be "stopped out," or painted over with asphaltum varnish, "stopping out varnish," on a fine brush. When it gets too thick to work well, thin this varnish with turpentine.

If the plate is to be "bitten" in a tray of acid, immerse it and allow it to remain long enough for the lines that are to be etched lightest, and therefore to print palest, to be eaten into the metal to the desired depth. Remove the plate, wash off with water, and "stop out" all the lines of the design that are now deep enough. Again immerse the plate in the bath and allow it to remain long enough for the etching of the next deepest lines, remembering that all lines still exposed have already been subjected to one etch. Continue the process of progressive "biting" and stopping out until the lines that are to etch deepest have attained their full depth. Remove the ground with a solvent, preferably kerosene, and clean the plate with whiting.

An alternative method is to draw and etch the deepest lines first, adding others afterwards until the lighter ones are drawn and etched last—it being remembered that all lines already bitten will etch still deeper with every subsequent application of acid. Again, the entire design may be drawn with needles of different sizes, according to the widths of line desired, and the plate subjected to one biting. Still another procedure, which is, however, seldom followed, is to make the drawing on the grounded plate while the latter is actually in the bath, beginning with the lines that are to etch deepest and ending with the lightest. This method would be quite unsuitable in the case of complicated or detailed work. The progressive stopping out method, using the bath, is the one most commonly practiced. However, many etchers prefer to apply the acid with brush or feather, stopping out passages as they become sufficiently etched.

Any acid which will corrode the metal used may be employed. The two most generally used, however, are nitric and hydrochloric (muriatic). In either case the acid should be C. P. (chemically pure). If nitric is used, it is mixed with water according to the strength desired. One-third acid to two-thirds water is an average solution. Hydrochloric is used with chlorate of potash and water, in the proportions of five parts of acid, to one part of chlorate of potash, to forty-four parts of water. This is known as Dutch Mordant and is an invaluable solution. The proportions of its ingredients may be varied according to desired strength. The only other acid at all generally used in etching is perchloride of iron which, however, etches the same kind of line as the Dutch bath and has



*Immersing the grounded and drawn-on plate in the acid bath. This glimpse of John Taylor Arms' studio shows the screen at the window, electric heating stove, and prints by fellow etchers on the wall*

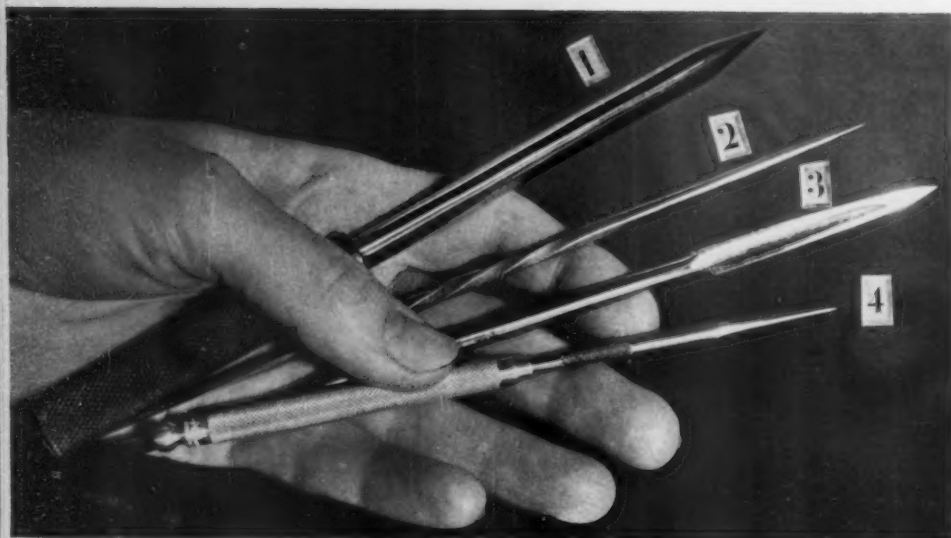
the disadvantages of being a dark color and of creating a deposit in the lines which renders it advisable to etch the plate face down in the bath.

The characteristic cross-section of the line etched with nitric is that of a wide, shallow trench with rough, irregular edges; that of the Dutch Mordant line is a narrow, straight-sided chasm with right-angle shoulders. The former prints as a warm, vital line, the latter is cooler and more formal. The nitric line is much easier to remove from the plate than the hydrochloric. If the latter prints too cold, it may be made warmer in feeling by brushing a weak nitric solution over it before the ground is removed from the plate. This roughens the hard, regular edges and the resultant line has the durability of the hydrochloric line combined with the sentient quality of the nitric.

These two acids, used alone or in combination upon a plate, will provide the etcher with a wide range of feeling in

his lines. Furthermore, given an emotional concept, good composition, and good draftsmanship, just to the degree to which every individual line in the plate is sensitive and intrinsically beautiful, so will the resulting print be sensitive and beautiful; and just to the degree to which the line is dead and meaningless, so will the print be. Volumes could be written on that indefinable thing we call "line quality" and on the individual properties of the lines that have been etched by the masters. And still the whole story would not be told.

When the ground has been removed from the plate the latter is in its "first state." An impression is taken, or a "trial proof is pulled," which becomes "trial proof number one." I suppose it has happened that, when the etcher sees this, he sees the complete realization of his vision—but it has never happened to me. Always there are changes or additions to be made, and the problem of erasure arises. Let us suppose a passage



*Four tools used by the etcher*

- 1 Burnisher
- 2 Drypoint tool
- 3 Scraper
- 4 Etching needle

*Below:*

*An etched plate after the ground has been removed and the design bitten into it. The incised lines have been filled in with whiting so they will show up in the photograph*

offends and is to be removed and re-etched. With a sharp, three-sided instrument known as a scraper (a flat "mezzotint scraper" may be used) go over the offending passage, scraping away the copper. Eventually the bad lines will disappear, but a hollow will remain which will hold ink and print as a dirty, gray spot. With a pair of callipers, one point of which is sharp and the other dull, mark on the back of the plate an area corresponding to that scraped out. Place the plate face down on a small anvil, protecting its surface with some soft material, and, with hammer and nail-punch, hammer it up from the back until the hollow has disappeared. The area scraped will, however, still be rough and must be smoothed down by treating it with a steel tool with a mirror finish, known as a "burnisher" (using oil or vaseline); followed by various fine abrasives such as fine-toothed charcoal (with water or oil), carborundum powder, emery, rouge, etc. The perfect finish, to restore the copper to its original condition, may be obtained with "levigated alumina," the finest abrasive of all. It sounds difficult, and it is, but it is as possible to erase lines deeply etched into copper as it is to rub out pencil lines on paper—only, masters of the scraper and burnisher are as rare as masters of the needle.

After the above procedure, the plate may be re-ground—but not smoked—and the removed passage re-drawn and re-etched. In re-grounding, use roller or dabber and work the ground well into the lines: liquid ground, unless too thick, will leave their edges exposed and subject to the action of the acid. When the ground has been removed and another proof pulled, the latter will be the second trial proof and the plate will be in its second state.

If a single passage or a whole design is found to be etched too deeply, it may be reduced by grinding down the surface of the plate, with infinite care, with



Water of Ayr stone, charcoal, and other abrasives. Burnishing will push in the edges, or shoulders, of lines, rather than reduce them evenly, thus causing them to print gray. If, on the other hand, the whole design, or any part of it, is under-etched, it may be deepened by laying a "re-biting ground" and continuing the etching. Melt a little ground on a heated plate, charge a small roller with it, and roll over the surface of the plate a thin film which will adhere everywhere to the surface but not enter into and clog the finest line. This is a process requiring great skill—when you have mastered it, learn to lay a re-biting ground on an aquatinted plate! When you become discouraged with changes and corrections

on a plate, remember the dictum of Maxime Lalanne, a great technician; "while there is copper there is hope."

The plate is now ready for printing.

★ ★ ★

In the third and final installment of the Series, John Taylor Arms will describe the method of printing from the etched plate. Readers are referred to Warren Wheelock's article on Mr. Arms and his work which appeared in our February 1939 number, with reproductions of his etchings.

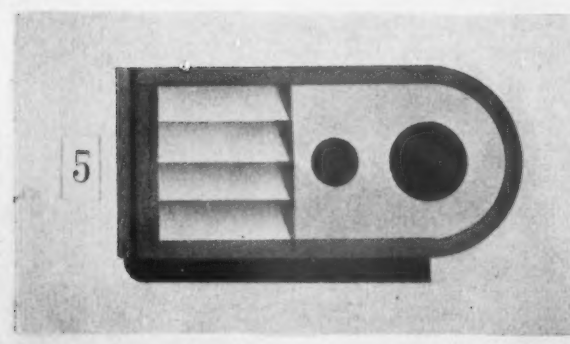
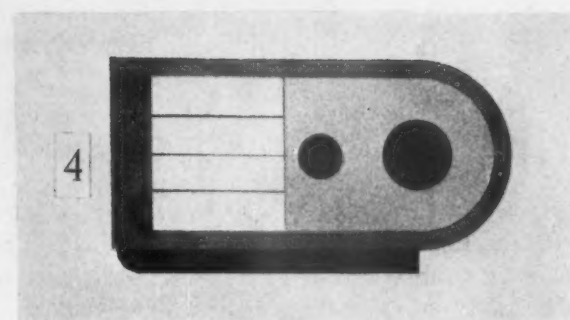
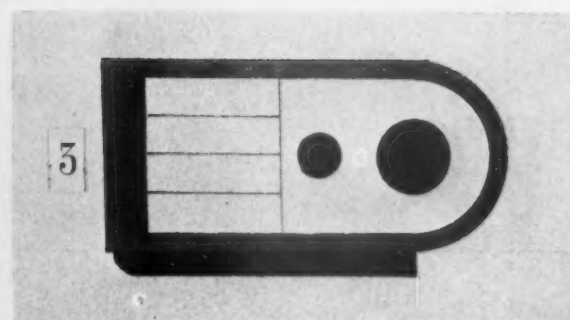
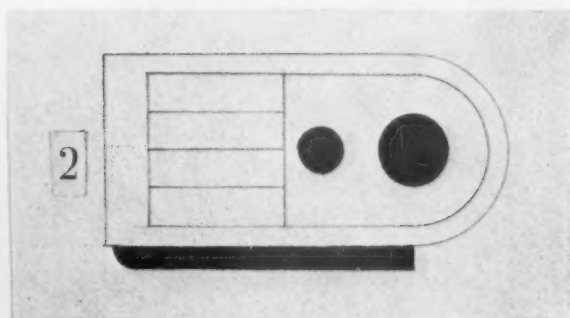
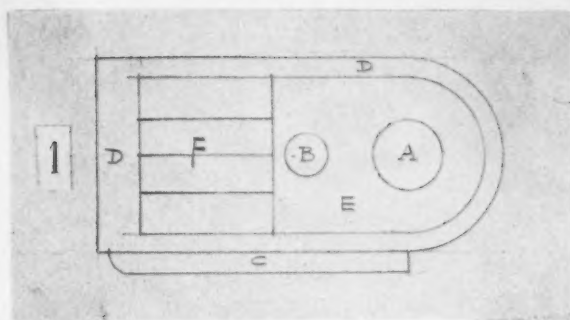
Mr. Arms is editor of the print department in the new magazine *Print*, a new Journal of the Graphic Arts, published in New Haven, Conn.

# The Technic of the Airbrush

**Jamesine M. Franklin**

*Director, School of Professional Art*

*Illustrated by students of the school*



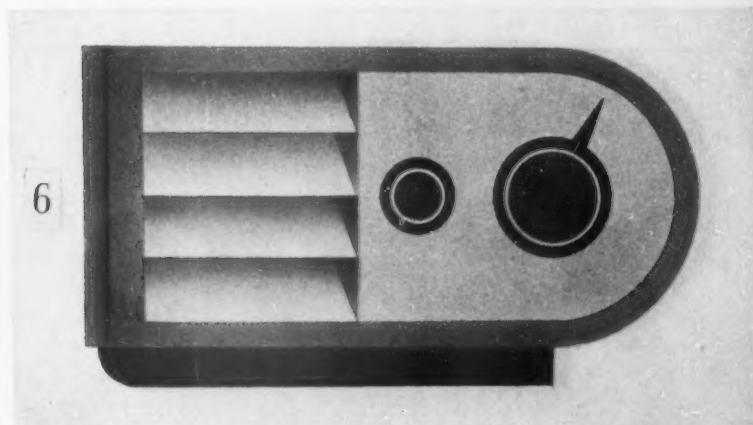
Nearly fifty years ago the first practical airbrush appeared on the market. For a long time it was regarded mainly as a mechanical tool desirable for certain types of quick work and for novel effects, but ordinarily not to be considered for art work of any real importance.

Gradually this condition has changed, and while it is recognized that the airbrush, like any other instrument, has natural limitations, more and more artists in both the fine and commercial art fields are discovering it to be an extremely useful aid in many kinds of work. Under skillful operation it can produce the smallest dot, the thinnest line, the smoothest tint, the lightest and the darkest tone ever likely to be desired. Not only is it popular for retouching photographs and other art work but innumerable magazine illustrations, fashion drawings, posters, murals, photographic enlargements, etc., have been executed, at least in part, through its use. Particularly is it in demand for the covering of surfaces with even, perfect tone, either flat or graded, and for soft, delicate effects.

While there are many types of airbrushes on the market, ranging all the way from the large paint guns employed for spraying big surfaces—these are often used for painting houses and automobiles with oil paint or lacquer—to small ones suited to the execution, by the artist, of fine detail and the application of delicate tones,

## *Radio Cabinet by Julian G. Davies*

1. Clearly outlined pencil drawing is covered with frisket paper—each line is cut with frisket knife.
2. Frisket covering areas marked A, B, C, is removed and the areas airbrushed till black.
3. Area D shows frisket removed and area airbrushed to a dark grey.
4. Frisket covering area E is removed and area airbrushed to a middle grey.
5. All remaining frisket is removed and each area in F is treated separately, using new frisket.
6. When the sketch has reached this stage, finishing touches are added with a compass and a little white paint. In airbrush, one generally gets the dark areas first.





*"Massachusetts"*

*A  
Decorative Panel  
airbrush  
on glass  
by*

*Joseph Melillo*

*The original is  
30x40 inches*



basically they are all alike. By means of compressed air or carbonic gas they create a spray and force it, under the artist's control, on to the surface to be treated. In the larger studios, an air compression unit, customarily electric, is often a part of the equipment; individual artists more frequently rely on carbonic gas obtainable in tank form. The air or gas is conveyed to the brush—a relatively small instrument easily held in the hand—by means of a hose. The air pressure is controlled at the tank by a gauge and regulator. The brush itself is capable of adjustment to blow a fine or a somewhat coarser spray. The operator uses a finger lever to release the spray as needed, and further controls the effect by varying the distance from the paper (and the angle) at which the brush is held. The airbrush being a very delicate instrument, patience and skill are needed to operate it successfully. It's a case of practice makes perfect!

For most art work, water color is the medium selected. Inks are sometimes used and special airbrush colors are also on the market. The consistency of the color (which is placed in a metal cup or glass container attached to the side or bottom of the brush) will depend partly on the size and type of brush. Ordinarily, it should be no heavier than drawing ink. There must be no grit or dirt in the color as even tiny particles may clog the brush. It is imperative always to keep the brush thoroughly clean inside and out.

As it is usually necessary to protect certain areas of the paper from the spray, masks or friskets are commonly employed. These are normally cut from a special frisket paper, sufficiently transparent to permit the drawing to show through. This is fastened to the drawing with frisket cement; which dries quickly yet remains tacky indefinitely. It is absolutely necessary that the

frisket paper be securely fastened to the drawing or the color will blow under it. Special knives are available for cutting through the frisket so that unwanted portions can be stripped away. Obviously, it is necessary in such a case to make sure that any cement which remains on the drawing surface is removed before spraying is commenced: this can be easily done merely by rubbing the fingers over it.

In the accompanying illustrations we present a very simple demonstration of the use of frisket in a design for a radio cabinet. The captions are self-explanatory. Work of this nature, where the edges of each value must be clean cut, could not be done without the use of friskets.

The panel reproduced herewith shows the use of airbrush in a purely decorative manner. It was executed in full color on the back of glass, and mounted on copper cloth, thereby producing permanency and brilliance. Friskets were made for the individual units of the design, and where a varying degree of spray or a vignette effect was necessary, the artist applied the airbrush freehand. The result was quite novel and æsthetic, and the idea could be very conveniently used in display. The panel was one of a series designed by the students depicting the history, commerce, and life of the various states. One particularly beautiful design was executed completely in white airbrush on the back of glass and mounted on gold. This panel, because of its very decorative quality, was purchased for use in a modern apartment as an overmantel panel.

There are so many uses for airbrush in the field of advertising design that it would be impossible to show examples of all of them. In the design of posters, covers, magazine pages, and billboards, especially, it has a most important place. By using friskets covering various units of design and spraying the background, interesting silhouettes may be obtained. This principle is effectively used when lettering constitutes the only element of a design in a billboard, cover, etc.; in building form in

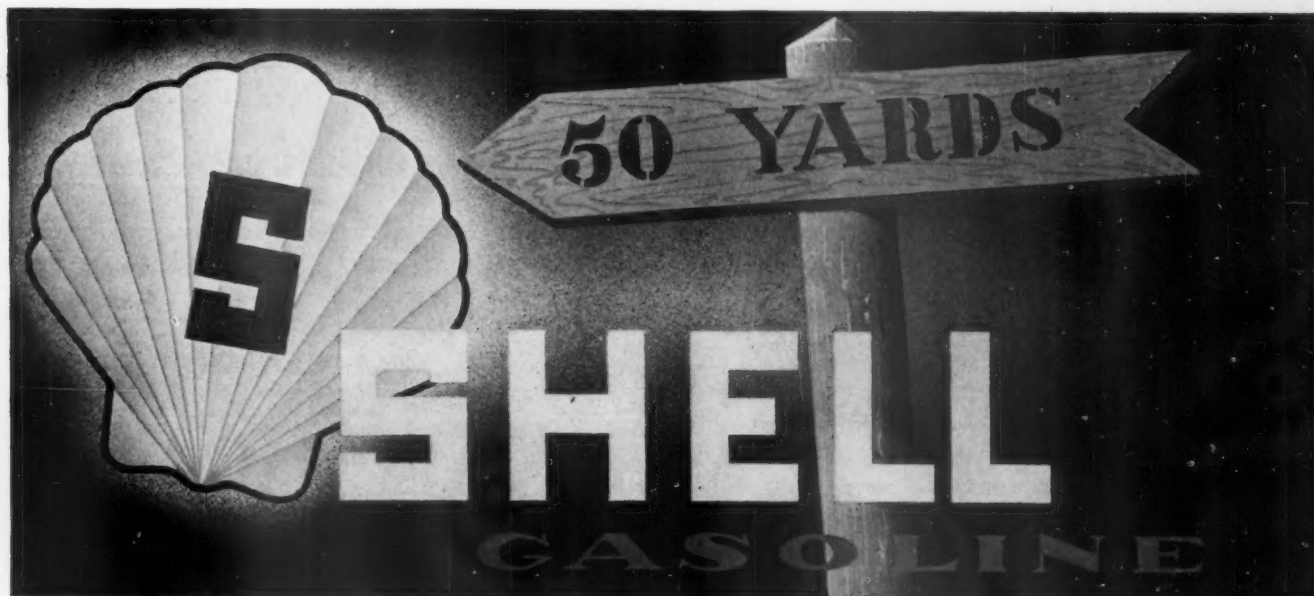


*Cover Design by Sherry Strobridge*

letters and adding roundness to them, the airbrush is invaluable, too, producing a modern, unique effect as illustrated in the Fortune cover here shown.

It should not be assumed that all airbrush jobs are done with that instrument exclusively. In the Shell poster, for example, it will be noted that the grain of the sign board was painted with a brush, while in the case of the decorative panel certain details such as the small figures were similarly treated.

*Billboard Design by Lynn R. Carpenter*





*Maps play an important role in Stevan Dohanos' research work for his illustrations*

## *Telegraph Poles and Fire Plugs*

Steve goes out to paint, he brings back the most surprising pictures. Once he painted a twenty-foot length of rusted railroad tracks with weeds growing up between rotting — and to him, exquisite — ties. This watercolor, by the way, happened to be a turning point in his life. Edward Bruce saw it at the Whitney Museum, bought it. Later when the Section of Fine Arts of the Treasury Department (of which Bruce is director) was looking for artists to send to the Virgin Islands, Dohanos was among the five lucky ones selected.

Another railroad subject is a view of a steel gondola car; not the whole car, just the lower part of it showing two wheels of one truck and the short strip of rails underneath. The drab, worn colors of the car and the roadbed are accented by the bright yellow dandelions.

Looking out of a window into his backyard he found a subject there: a revolving clothes dryer silhouetted light against the green foliage. On a wall in his living room is a watercolor of a dilapidated section of hurdle fence,

which has slumped from old age into a rhythmic, weathered pattern. Another picture in his studio is a watercolor of a wash-basin glorified by a ray of sunlight touching its curved rim. Steve likes signs too. In his affections they compete with telegraph poles and fire plugs. He paints them into his landscapes just as the expert sign painter would have them.

In all such commonplace items of the contemporary American Scene, Dohanos finds the loveliness that others must take long journeys to seek. "No matter how drab any subject may be," he says, "there can be something whimsically beautiful in it or it becomes beautiful through accidents of light and shadow. And I try to drain every last drop of interest out of it. As an example, an old frayed broom can catch a lovely light and cast an equally dramatic shadow, and beyond that it can suggest and recall the pattern of the daily lives of people who use it."

Texture, perhaps more than any other quality, arouses this passion for rendering commonplace things. Examine Dohanos' pictures with this in mind. And look especially for worn textures which he says "are more exciting than new ones. Anything that shows wear and tear, age and neglect, has more character than bright, new and polished surfaces."

Dohanos speaks of the "attitude" and "eloquence"

★ IF you should be ushered into the living room of Stevan Dohanos' new home in Westport, Conn., you would almost immediately notice a very unusual decorative object set in a nook by the fireplace. It would puzzle you greatly, that is, if you were not familiar with the man's character and work. To Dohanos' friends and fellow artists it is a graphic symbol of his passion for a particular kind of beauty which he sees everywhere around him. It is a telegraph pole. Or rather a model of one. Planted in a mahogany base six-by-twelve inches, this miniature replica of a telegraph pole — about eighteen inches high — faithfully reproduces its stance, its structure, its texture, its color, its weather-beaten steadfastness: all the qualities that make Steve Dohanos love telegraph poles and other common objects which most people think of as ugly, if they think about them at all. Now Steve's passion for telegraph poles and fire plugs — he has painted both from Maine to Florida — is of more than incidental interest. So you can see that the miniature telegraph pole represents something more than a hobby of collecting strange things. It reveals the man.

That pole symbolizes a selective vision through which he views the world about him. One might almost call it a sixth sense which enables him to discover beauty in unexpected places and in the most trivial objects. When



# An Interview with Stevan Dohanos

of such subjects as miners' shabby shacks with their crooked clapboards and broken windowpanes, or a worn pathway through an empty lot. He asks you to note the "dignity" in the drape of an old canvas thrown over a cache of workman's tools covered for the night.

You've got to understand this passion of his for beauty in common things to explain his spectacular success as an illustrator. And you will see, as you study his work, that his feeling for the significant in incidentals is a big factor in making his illustrations convincing. You will see that he has lavished painstaking effort on every part of his drawing, in backgrounds as well as in foregrounds. He says that the rendering of every detail is a real experience for him.

In the story "Man Lost," a serial which ran in the *Saturday Evening Post* during October and November\*, the only weapon of primitive savages who form the background of the story is an *hulche* — a cunningly carved stick with which they threw their arrows. Dohanos found such a stick at the American Museum of Natural History, and, to get this detail right, he sketched the original and later carved a replica to be used by the model posing for the painting. The painting of it in the illustration carries conviction.

But incidentals, no matter how significant they may be, are but a part of illustration. Dohanos when asked to talk about illustration will begin with emphasis upon

\* "Man Lost" began in the October 26th *Saturday Evening Post* and concluded in the November 16th issue.



FALL PAINT JOB

*A Watercolor by Stevan Dohanos*

*This realistic watercolor, exhibited last year at the Whitney Museum, depicts a black fire plug with yellow trimmings which repeat the color of autumn leaves*

research, not because it is the first part of every job, but because it is — for him — perhaps the most creative part. But let us ask him to tell us in his own words just how he goes about making an illustration:

"Usually a story carries two or three illustrations. When I read the manuscript, a lot of illustrative ideas come to me and I jot down all of them as I read. I later pick out one as the dramatic smash that portrays



*One of six murals painted by Stevan Dohanos for the West Palm Beach Post Office. The theme for the series was the delivery of mail by foot from Miami to Lake Worth in the early days when the beaches and swamps were the only trails*

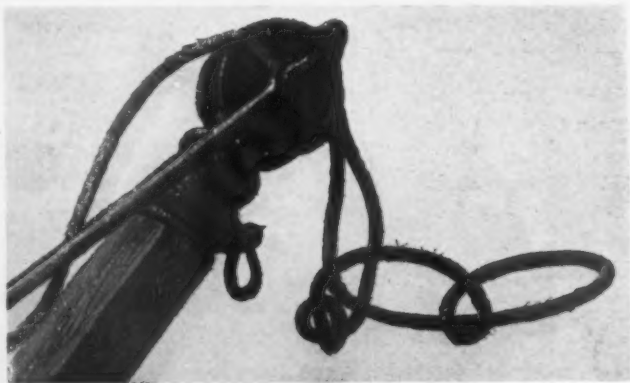
an important highlight in the story and also portrays some of the main characters. Secondary illustrations are less pretentious and may be selected more to add local color and mood to the story.

"After all, the author describes a scene pretty well and to re-create this setting is just a job of research and posing of models. To this you add your own knowledge of nature and the way things move and exist. Your technic and ability to draw what you set out to draw finally carry it from that point to its completion. The individuality of style comes into the painting at all points — from the selection of incidents to the last brush stroke.

"An important factor is research. And I can't be too emphatic about the importance of that. I am definitely lost if I don't have complete and authentic information for a drawing, particularly because I work so realistically that there is no covering up a bit of ignorance with a careless stroke of the brush.

"When I do pictures with a locale in some other part of the world, I often start with a map. Maps mean a lot to me. They give me information not only about the specific locale but of surrounding towns and country. If I can't find material about the exact locality I use data from surrounding country, suggested by my study of the map, with whatever facts I can glean from the author's text and other books on the subject. But maps do more than that. They always stir my imagination, and that, I think, is pretty important. After all, an illustrator ought to have something of his own to add. The creative illustrator goes beyond the author's conception of a situation. He should be able to enrich it.

"The map was particularly useful in illustrating 'Man Lost.' My research failed to unearth anything in the exact section of South America mentioned by the author, but reference to maps guided me to material in neighboring territory. The fact that I had spent some time in the Virgin Islands and knew the tropical stuff first-hand was most helpful in this assignment.



Perhaps that was one reason for my getting the story.

"Where do I get my material? Everywhere and anywhere: the library, the museum, in the telephone booth — calling up everyone who might have been in the locality — and of course through a visit to the spot whenever that is feasible.

"A typical example of how I get advice on jobs when I need it is this: Recently I had to show a cadet flyer in a training plane, and he was getting into a lot of trouble with it. The first man I went to for information about planes and flyers couldn't help me, but he passed me on to someone else who knew someone in the flying business. Thus I was referred from person to person until I finally met an army flyer at Mitchell Field. He gave me everything I needed and the job which started out as a terrific headache became a delightful adventure. The Lieutenant and I became good friends, and recently it was a great thrill to have him dip his bomber in salute as he flew over our house in Westport."

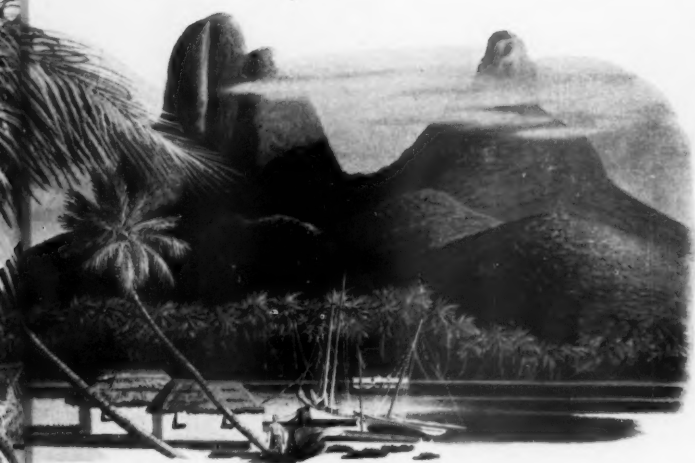
Reminded that some illustrators rely upon an assistant for much of their research, Dohanos replied: "All illustrators work in different ways. For me, research is a personal problem. It is creative and in doing my own research my ideas develop as I go from one source to another. It is part of the mechanics of a job.

**"TANGLED CABLES"** On one of his sketching trips Dohanos, attracted by the beauty of this prosaic detail, painted it in watercolor



One-color illustration by Stevan Dohanos for the Nordhoff and Hall serial of Tahiti in the *Saturday Evening Post* (November, 1939) called "Out of Gas." The original drawing, 36 inches long, was done on illustration board with watercolor. Beginning with dark tones in transparent washes, Dohanos builds up to light by the addition of opaque white

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"It's the emergency job that gives illustrators headaches. Single-handed we often have to do a complete Hollywood production in two or three weeks: cast characters, produce costumes, design settings, create action, etc., and then make the drawings to boot."

Today the camera has become standard equipment in most illustrators' studios. For some artists it merely supplements direct drawing from models; for others it supplants drawing from models except for what might be called "finishing." Some artists use photographs exclusively. The customary procedure is to take dozens of photographs from the costumed model in many variations of the desired action. The photograph may be done by the artist, but more often by a professional camera man. Some illustrators then dismiss the model and work exclusively from the pictures. Others use the photographs but keep the model at hand as well.

Dohanos uses photographs — he takes them with his own camera — composing the models in the pictures as one might in preliminary sketches. But like

most illustrators he maintains that the important question is not the means, but the result.

Asked what method of figure construction he employs, Dohanos explained: "I had a very hazy background in figure construction. I missed all the anatomical gymnastics of working from the nude model — from the bone out to the costume. As a consequence, and I suppose partly because I am so interested in textures and the play of light and shade, I reverse the process and draw the figure as it looks to me from the outside, fully costumed."

"Action is fully as important as structure," he continued, "and it helps me a lot to go through the action myself before directing the model."

As a matter of fact, the figure in illustration is a relatively new problem for Dohanos because until three years ago he had never drawn or painted figures, his subjects and his interests being confined to still life and landscape. But his Virgin Islands experience changed all that. When he returned with his collection of tropical paintings he had something fresh and dramatic that was in demand by the magazines. That meant figures. No one was concerned by the artist's lack of conventional training as a figure artist. An accomplished graphic craftsman can draw anything when the need comes. There are Dohanos' figures, as adequate and convincing as though drawn by a veteran figure man.

Stevan Dohanos, one of a family of nine children, was born in 1907, in the mill town of Lorain, Ohio. His school days were over when he reached the legal age of sixteen, and he then became a working man. He spent several years at various jobs until he finally succeeded in getting into an advertising art studio in Cleveland. His only preparation for an art career was a correspondence course and such self-instruction as he could manage through drawing during spare hours. He made innumerable linoleum cuts and woodcuts.

In the studio he did everything that came along: lettering, designing and layouts. All of this he considers splendid training, particularly layouts. He did a score of these each day for three years or so. That gave him a sense of composition that is basic in illustration.

Dohanos began working in a New York studio in 1934. There he did still life subjects: salads, beverages, and all manner of products. He also did many landscape studies for advertisements.

It was in 1936 that he received from Edward Bruce the telegram



Rockwell Kent's "ANNA"

In this ink drawing Dohanos satirizes the title of a book by an artist who has been one of his graphic heroes





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telling him of the Government's invitation to go to the Virgin Islands, on a seven months painting trip. The expense budget was adequate for a single man, but Steve had a wife and two boys of four and five. He decided they all should go. That decision took some courage because it meant giving up a good job at the studio and borrowing money to boot. It proved to be a wise move. Those seven months in a new and stimulating environment set Steve's feet upon new paths. Not only did this experience help put him in the front rank of American illustrators; it was the start of a career as mural painter. Already he has received several commissions; and the highly individual quality of his work as a painter has brought him into national prominence in this field. In 1938 he did two murals for the West Virginia Department of Agriculture and Forestry Building in Elkins, West Virginia. Last year he painted a series of six murals for the Palm Beach Post Office. In January 1941, having been chosen to paint the murals for the Virgin Islands Post Office, he will lock his studio door in Westport and once more journey to the tropics.

Dohanos believes in periodically tackling outside assignments other than his regular work, whatever it may be, thus seeking new experiences. "This will keep me from getting into a rut and being pigeonholed as a specialist in any given kind of subject matter. An artist ought always to be investigating his possibilities in other fields. Whatever else it does, the experience will inject new life into what may have become humdrum. As for me," he explains, "I certainly do not feel that I have found myself yet, and I intend to reach out in various directions, enlarging my outlook and developing my skills. Probably I'll end up painting telegraph poles and fire plugs. Of course it is not necessary to go to far away places to find that rejuvenation of spirit which 'getting away from it all' will bring. You should find plenty of excitement not far from your own door."

As to technic, Dohanos is definitely a watercolor man. He starts with transparent washes and adds white to his color as he builds up his pictures from dark to

"MAN LOST" This is one of a series of illustrations by Dohanos for the serial "Man Lost," by C. E. Scroggins, which ran in the Saturday Evening Post from October 26th to November 16th (1940) inclusive. It was reproduced in color. The original watercolor was 35 inches long



Photograph of a negro model wearing a wig and armed with an "hulche"—a throwing stick for arrows. This is one of about 25 photographs Dohanos made from this model

light. His lightest tones and highlights are opaque.

At present Dohanos divides his time among advertising art, magazine illustration and fine arts. Among his most important advertising assignments was a series of full color paintings for Traveler's Insurance Company appearing in *National Geographic* in 1938 and 1939. Last year he did an important color series for the Nash automobile. In these Nash drawings he demonstrates that although he especially loves old textures, he can render the glory of a new automobile with the best of them.

In the fine arts field Dohanos is already a well-known figure. He has exhibited in many of the big shows and his work is being bought for important collections.

Here is an American artist who will bear watching.

# TEMPERA

BY HERBERT E. MARTINI

*The use of tempera and the tempera-oil technic has become quite general among contemporary painters. Yet, judging from the flood of inquiries concerning these new-old technics, they are far from familiar to a host of art students and professional artists. To satisfy the need for information about them the Editors have asked Herbert E. Martini to write a series of short articles on the subject. These will run in five successive numbers of AMERICAN ARTIST.*

*Mr. Martini has devoted a long career to the study and manufacture of artists' colors. His opinions are based upon painstaking scientific study and practical experience. Because the author was trained as a painter, and thus approaches technical problems from the artists' side of the fence, he is particularly well qualified to write about them. Ed.*

## PART I—THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To establish tempera painting as a distinct method in its rightful place and in its proper relation to other painting technics, it will be necessary to consider briefly the evolution of painting methods and the etymology of the word — TEMPERA.

All means of recording representative art have depended basically on a binder or vehicle to hold the pigment together and to the surface to which it is applied. It is strange to note that, in the hundreds of years that man has made attempts to draw and paint, little change has taken place in these basic methods.

The crude drawings done with a piece of charred wood in a cave, by a prehistoric man, depended on the roughness of the stone wall to hold the particles of charcoal outlining the drawings. Today, drawing with charcoal, chalks or pastels on abrasive-surfaced papers is in principle the same method.

The sarcophagi decorated by the Egyptians with colors mixed with glue obtained from boiling animal bones and cartilage in water was the same as the distemper of the scenic painter of today. The fresco buono described by Pliny, an early recorder of painting methods of ancient Rome, or that practised by WPA artists today in decorating government buildings, depended then, as now, on the setting of the lime (changing of the hydrate of lime into the insoluble carbonate of lime) to hold the artist's pigment to the surface to which it was applied.

Next, in chronological order came the encaustic paintings, which method has had only a few experimental revivals since it was first used. This process consisted of taking sticks of wax with which pigments had been mixed and melting these onto the picture surface by means of an assortment of various shaped metal instruments previously heated in a brazier. The word "encaustic" meaning "to burn in" is self-explanatory.

The book by Cennino Cennini, a compilation of art instruction and painting

methods in the 12th century, describes in detail the fresco buono process, but also something new — the preparation of gesso panels for easel pictures and how to paint on them with colors mixed with either the whites or the whole egg. This is the process often spoken of as "tempera." He also tells of using this egg vehicle for painting on the dry or set lime wall, calling it fresco secco (dry) to distinguish it from the true fresco painted on the wet lime or the fresco buono.

One of the most important painting methods, that depending on the drying or oxidation of certain oils as a binder for pigments, was still practically unused in the arts. Linseed oil was first expressed from the flaxseed in early Roman times, but as informed by the writings of Aetius, its only employment was for medicinal uses. In Cennini's time oil colors were used for painting in technical, not artistic way; and linseed oil is mentioned in many other manuscripts, a hundred years and more before the time of the Brothers Van Eyck, who have been popularly acclaimed as the discoverers of oil painting.

It is the general opinion among authorities that the Van Eyck contribution was rather a blending of the egg with linseed making a tempera, easier to paint with, and the use of this tempera as an underpainting to be finished with oil and varnish glazes, enabling them to obtain that permanent, beautiful enamel-like brilliance of color in their pictures.

Artists slowly turned away from this built-up method to the direct one of painting only with oil colors, evolving into the use of oil color such as is known by every student and artist today. Tempera underpainting was not immediately abandoned for as late as Van Dyck we know that he used this method for some colors, especially blues, to preserve their freshness. Traditions carried from master to apprentice were the background determining the use of

certain colors and processes. It was the test of time as against scientific research of today, and Van Dyck knew that the yellowing of the oil would make his blues a dirty green.

It was not until the middle of 1800 that the Swiss artist, Arnold Boecklin, searching for a method to recapture the luscious brilliance of the Van Eyck school delved into all available writings and brought about a revival of tempera painting. His consummate skill as an artist, plus his mastery of technical craftsmanship led him to state conclusions about the methods and vehicles of the old masters, which thirty to forty years later were established as correct by scientific research.

It was not only the depth of color that he sought but also the reasons why those old pictures retained that color and did not become dimmed with the passage of time. An inspection of Boecklin's paintings from the technical side shows a much better preservation than those of many of his contemporaries.

For a man who mastered encaustic, stucco lustro, oil painting, fresco buono, tempera and many other technics there is not a single picture that shows that this mastery of materials interfered with his freedom of expression. He always knew just what he wanted to do and most important *how* to do it.

It is a very healthy sign that artists have in recent years directed so much of their attention to correct habits of painting. No matter how carefully prepared his materials may be, their use in an unorthodox manner presupposes an early deterioration of his pictures. It is my hope that through these articles at least one phase of technical mastery may be cleared up to encourage its use for permanent painting and not its abuse as a cure-all for certain drawbacks of other painting methods.

★ ★ ★

In following issues, Mr. Martini will give recipes for grounds and the various kinds of emulsions recommended for tempera and oil-tempera methods of painting. He will also suggest exercises for those who wish to experiment with these processes.

February

Chemistry and Physics of Tempera Emulsions

March

Preparation of Typical Tempera Emulsions

April

Suitable Surfaces for Tempera Painting

May

Glazing with Oil over Tempera Underpainting



# Why I did it

ERNEST W. WATSON REPLIES TO A CRITIC

When I made the pencil drawing opposite, it was with no intention of having it reproduced in *AMERICAN ARTIST* or any other publication or of offering it for sale. I was utterly selfish about it. I did it for my own pleasure.

But an acquaintance who happened to see it in my studio expressed surprise that I should draw from a photograph—"copy" was the word he used—for he knew that this sculpture, carved high up in the arched entrance of Chartres Cathedral was well out of the reach of my pencil. My reply was to ask him if he never sat down at his piano of an evening to play something from Chopin or Beethoven. I asked further if that was not something of a creative experience—and therefore rewarding.

The hour I spent with that medieval sculptor who on his scaffold in 1150 chiseled this lovely head from granite was an hour of unadulterated joy. In making the drawing I grew to really appreciate its delicate beauty. I never could have touched hands with its creator merely by looking at it. I had seen and remembered the original during visits to Chartres. The photograph gave me my chance to draw it.

I "copied" the head in one sense. I did try to duplicate its structure and its expression, somewhat as my friend would copy the notes of the master's musical composition. But just as a musician puts something of his own creative spirit into a composition written by another, so my rendering of the head was interpretive rather than literal. I allowed myself the liberty of accenting details that gave me particular pleasure. I permitted white paper to creep up into the head from below. I pointed up structural features here and there. I think I put something of my spiritual response into the drawing.

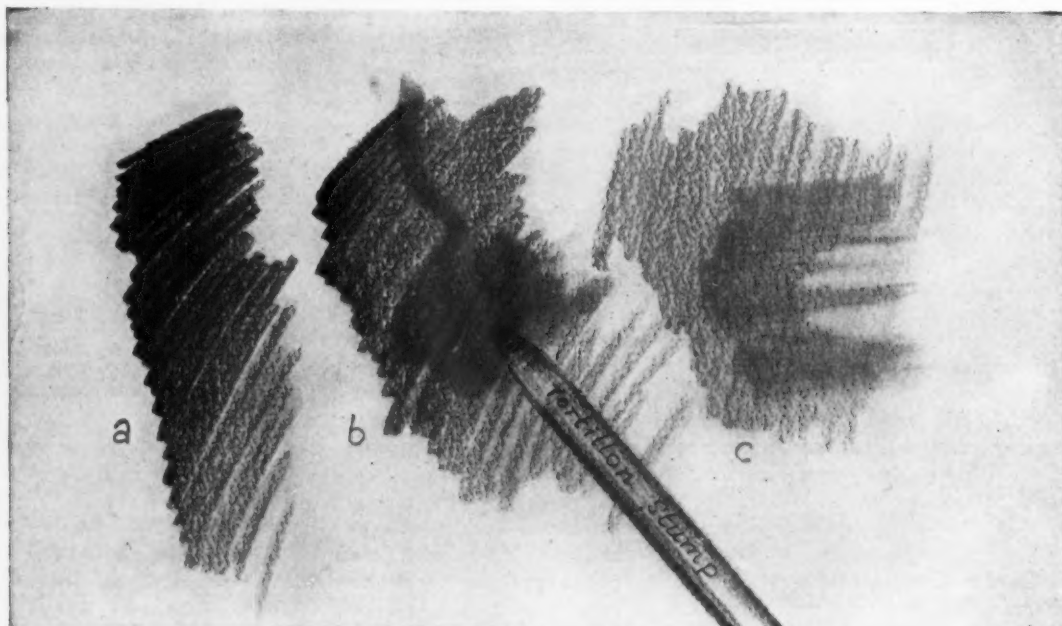
I might have got a bigger thrill from drawing this head up on the scaffold at Chartres. I'm not sure. But I doubt if my experience would have been more creative.

As a rule I prefer of course to draw directly from objects themselves. The opportunity for interpretation is apt to be broader. Yet "copying" a figure from life is no more commendable than "copying" a good photograph of the same figure. Some artists spend a lifetime copying models, be they human models, trees, fields or mountains.

To "copy" a photograph is a stupid performance. Copying nature is no less stupid. What counts is the attitude. What matters is whether or not the artist can interpret his subject in a creative spirit. If he has nothing of himself to contribute he will copy whatever is before him.

So I am not ashamed of my drawing done from a photograph. It was a great success. It did for me just what I hoped it would do: it gave me a handclasp across the ages with an unknown genius of old. What it might mean to others was less important because I did it only for myself, though I make bold to show it here in the hope that some part of my pleasure in doing it may be experienced by others, particularly those who love the lead pencil and are interested in its possibilities. For those, a word on technic may be welcome.

I used only very soft pencils—3B, 4B and 5B. The paper was a bristol board having a slight tooth which gave the soft pencil tones (a) a stonelike texture. In places I rubbed these tones lightly with the tortillon stump (b) in order to give more variety of tone and texture. The kneaded eraser played its part (c) in lightening tones as needed. This rubber lifts off graphite by pressing down upon the tone rather than by rubbing. The reproduction is exact size of the original drawing.







DETAIL FROM CHARTRES

# When the artist goes gunning



Photo by Max Richter

William R. Fisher came to our notice through a very swell watercolor hanging in the reception room of the Federal Advertising Agency. The painter, we were informed, was one of Federal's art directors. We found him in his office surrounded with layouts and copy for an advertising campaign—a typical busy executive.

Many art directors consort with the fine arts more or less surreptitiously. Only a few exhibit their paintings—as did Fisher in a recent one-man show at the Morton Gallery—and thus identify themselves with the painting fraternity. Although Fisher, in his fine arts phase, is first of all a painter, he has won distinction as an amateur photographer; has a collection of awards as evidence. But no art-minded person needs evidence beyond the prints reproduced herewith. They possess rare beauty; they exhibit all the knowledge and resource of a competent artist.

When Fisher goes gunning with his camera he selects his subjects with a painter's eye. He finds all the elements of a picture in the simplest objects which a less discriminating person would pass by. If the shadows are not exactly right he returns at a time when the light gives the desired pattern or tonal effect. He employs every possible artifice of composition. He practices the greatest patience as in the swan print where his subjects were constantly moving. He made several exposures of those swans before he got what he wanted. The result is a design which is beautiful in line, tone and pattern. Note the 2 and 1 arrangement of the swans. Note also the all-over pattern of the ducks in the stream beyond. The contrast of wild ducks with the domestic swans enhances the subject interest.

Fisher objected mildly to our featuring the swan print. He protested that "everyone does swans and ducks." Whereupon we selected still another subject that everybody does—still life. All of which goes to show that novelty has little to do with art. We couldn't resist that still life. Among the still lifes painted on thousands of canvases this photograph would have its own original charm.

Fisher was graduated from John Herron Art Institute in 1926. Was layout man for Ruthrauff & Ryan Advertising Agency, then art director at Federal for three years. Now he is a free-lance advertising artist specializing in lettering and layouts. His hand is seen in much of the national advertising on billboards and in magazines.

with a camera



PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM R. FISHER





## BUNDY CROWNINSHIELD WILLIAMSON TREIDLER

### Informal Discussion on Illustration and Problems of the Illustrator

NEW YORK, Dec. 6—Last evening's conference, the 6th in the 1940 series held at the Society of Illustrators Clubhouse at 128 East 63rd St., was among the most fruitful of these affairs at which America's best known illustrators are persuaded to take down their hair and tell all. Some of the meetings, though inspiring and meaty, are very high in flavor and so hilarious as to defy graphic reporting. Where for example is the stenographer who could capture the shattering—if not shattered—eloquence of John Gannam? (He appeared on the Nov. 14th program.) How could printed words convey the spirit, much less the content of that Macy scenario staged by art director Sanford E. Gerard and his entire art staff on Nov. 28th?

But last night's program was different. Illustrators Gilbert Bundy and James Williamson being very dignified and orderly gentlemen were easily kept in hand. Frank Crowninshield, art editor of *Vogue*, is a brilliant and witty interlocutor. Adolph Treidler, chairman of the lecture committee, always has a steady hand on the ivory controls. When last night he introduced Mr. Crowninshield the audience knew they were in for a rare treat. (The following excerpts are from a stenographic report of the evening's program.)

#### Frank Crowninshield

Before opening the informal discussion with his questions for the illustrators he discussed briefly the world situation as it has and will affect art: "Since we met here last year," he began, "two very extraordinary things have happened. First, as a result of the present conflict—through no fault or virtue on our part—we have become the custodian, the guardian, of the art of the world. Outside of some art in South America there is no other art in the world than that in North America. There is not any opera or art museum open in any country in Europe; not only have the museums been closed, but the art treasures have been buried—hidden away. There is no ballet, no dressmaking, no metal work or industrial designing.

"The painters are still there, the sculptors are still there—but their spirits are broken. I have had letters from artists in France: they tell me they are well, their wives are well; their homes are still intact, they have canvas—but they can't paint for the simple reason that they can't.

"The result has been that all of a sudden we, lucky guys that we

are, have found ourselves the keepers of art. European painters themselves are arriving in great numbers. In a very real sense the culture of the world is coming to this country. That the quality of that culture is going to infiltrate into this country, that we are going to assimilate it, is certainly not assured. All of a sudden the dressmaking art has been transferred to our shores. All of a sudden America is the seat of culture.

"What are we going to do with it? How competent are we going to be in cultivating the tastes of the world? . . . In the event of a great victory by Britain, I predict that inside of two years we'll all be in Paris looking for our jewels, our paintings, our costumes. If Germany should win the war we would see a lowering of standards everywhere. Our theatre, our ballet would be worse; we would see something—not approaching barbarism—but lowered to the taste of the masses, the sort of painting which gave us Cézanne.

"In a recent editorial in P.M., Ralph Ingersoll declared that the world of taste is over; we must face realities. He failed to say that that might be true in the event of a German victory and not if the British win the war. This attitude is spreading everywhere. People say, what is the use of fighting for old values, because they're dead anyway. Just as Mr. Kennedy is preaching today—defeatism. In short, that all you young artists are going to disappear in time—will become 'joiners,' plasterers, etc.

"I refuse to believe this. But taste is not what it used to be even five years ago. People from France find it very hard to get used to our unsightly mechanical 'improvements.' The most offending of these are the steam radiator and the ice water pitcher in every hotel room. All these great industrial designers in what is called 'styling'—a most horrible word—may be styling something but nothing worthwhile.

"If you take up any useful object produced in American life in 1810 to 1850 you will find that it is beautiful—the glassware, silverware, rugs, furniture: everything our ancestors had 150 years ago was beautiful."

Turning to Bundy and Williamson, Mr. Crowninshield asked if illustrators found it difficult to keep up with fashions: "What business men wear in their offices, in society and in sport—and even the clothes that decorate the lower order of animal life . . . I mean woman."

Bundy replied that there was not much to be said on the subject of fashion because most anyone could keep up with it through fashion magazines, but that the style, the *manner of living*, changes every now and then and it is much more difficult to analyze. "I don't think the clothes matter nearly as much as the change in the manner of living that happens every so often," he said. "It is true the

*manner* is passed off as *clothes*, but it is much more subtle than clothes." Mr. Bundy said of course it was important to keep up with the actual fashion in clothes also.

Williamson felt that the way to keep up with the *manner of living* depends upon your particular job. If your ideas of types and fashions were formed at the tender age of 15 or 20, you will find that what was good fashion then may be entirely out by the time you are 35 years old. The thing to do is look around, be observant of people and their customs. And when you have to draw Hollywood people, or men and women enjoying the sports of North Carolina, the surf in Miami, it is good to go to the source if at all possible. If this is not feasible, the material can be gleaned from fashion magazines. He suggested that a trip to Annapolis would be well worthwhile for the artist who is commissioned to draw military men or cadets in training. If the job calls for "high style" the artist should go to *Esquire* (*Vogue* used to be the source). In his assignment the artist may have to draw things he doesn't approve of but he will have to forget his own taste in this instance.

#### Photographic Illustration

Crowninshield: I understand that the art editors, all over the country, more and more are demanding a photographic type of illustration. If this is true will not that have an unfortunate influence on the work of the future? If the artist feels that his personal quality cannot be expressed will it not tend to stunt the development of that very personality? Under that condition would we have had a Daumier?

Bundy: I used to say that the artist should compete with the photographer by doing the thing the photographer can't do, use more and more lines. But, darn it all, the photographs are used more and more—and the line men are going out. As we use photographs more and more we lose effects that we used to get. Ever so many things that bore themselves on our consciousness are no longer available to us when we depend so entirely on photographs . . . I'd rather be wrong than use photographs because they disturb me. I can't use them.

Williamson: Excellent. I'd rather not use photographs, but work has to go out fast and sometimes I have to use them. It is much easier. I don't notice that photographic illustration is gaining; it seems to me it is falling into its natural place. People who read—and look at—the great majority of magazines demand photographic illustration. However, I think the more photographs are used the more good illustration stands out.

Crowninshield: In my own work interest in photographs for illustration has increased, not entirely due to the stupidity of art directors, but because photography has

improved so greatly. Recently we were going to have an article about various places in U. S. and its territories. We sent one man to Hawaii to make photographs; they were color photographs and they were magnificent. At about the same time Georgia O'Keeffe made some beautiful paintings in Hawaii—they really are the loveliest things. But I had the greatest difficulty in forcing even one of O'Keeffe's pictures into our article. It seems to me there is a constant working against using artists' illustrations, which I greatly regret.

#### Use of Models

Crowninshield, questioning the illustrators: How greatly do you use models; are they helpful; do you find a new supply of them all the time?

Bundy: Models are too darn much trouble. A model is for me merely the source of getting the bend of a knee, the crook of an arm which may be difficult to visualize. It is just that I have the habit of having a better eye in my memory.

Williamson: Art as a whole means imagination. Personally, I use models exclusively for drapery and faces—or if I see a face that I like in a magazine, I use that. When I was starting to draw, more or less professionally, at the age of 18, I drew a certain girl that I knew. Now it is almost impossible for me to draw any other type when I have to include a girl of 18 years or so in my drawings. To avoid this sort of thing one should get a model occasionally; or if not a model, then go out among people of the type needed in the assignment. Certainly an artist should not use models all the time or he will develop a certain style that is hard to break.

Crowninshield: Is it wise to be known by the type of girl—or man—you do? We know that Rubens had a type of nude that he painted; Renoir always used two models who happened to be sisters, and his pictures usually included Gabriel or her sister—or both. Would you care to be a type specialist, or would you prefer to be a free-lance and do any old type that comes along?—a universal genius like Goya?

Bundy: Type's a dangerous thing—though the money is good. If "fashion artists" hit the popular type on the nose, they have more work than they can do and they make a lot of money for everything they do. But they're all washed up after about five years.

Williamson: Goya, Daumier, Burne Jones expressed what they wished to express whether they sold anything or not. But we are talking about commercial art: whether or not to make a lot of money in a short time, or make less money but have a longer working life . . . If you want to make money as an illustrator and artist you should be prepared to cover as wide a field as possible. Also get a pretty girl to draw.

# with the Society of Illustrators

the prettiest girl you can find—and know how to draw socks and shoes and buttons.

Treidler joined the group by asking Mr. Crowninshield if he had been with *Century* when Jules Guerin was sent to the Holy Land and the Near East to do illustrations for Robert Hitchens' book on the Holy Land. Mr. Crowninshield said he was, that it had been in 1906. Mr. Treidler said Guerin had been away on that commission for about two years, had a caravan of camels and everything. He said he felt pretty sure that no artist is given that amount of time or equipment for an assignment these days. All work today has to be done on short notice, he insisted. Most artists have to make some use of photographs; but the conscientious ones do not "copy" them.

Williamson: That's just it. If you have a factual scene of a city hall you move as far from facts as possible. You arrange it in the drawing to make a picture; you certainly do not copy the photograph of the scene.

Bundy asked Williamson about a story recently published in the *Saturday Evening Post* involving the illustration of fishing piers in Miami that he'd never seen. "Did you get the photograph first? Or did you do your composition first and work the piers into it?"

Williamson: I'm probably wrong—but I got the photos first. The piers in Miami are different, and there aren't many of them; they had to be correct. So many people have seen those piers that if they hadn't been just right the *Post* would have been flooded with protesting letters.

## Layouts

Crowninshield: Doesn't the art director often give you a layout? And doesn't that annoy you a little? Isn't he usually wrong? How far do you depart from it?

Bundy: There is a new bunch of art directors in town so entirely in sympathy with illustrators that they are willing to listen to anything. However, some advertising agencies—hanging on from '26 and '27, still give us those complete layouts which are the death of anything creative.

Williamson interposed: Any art director who does give you a complete layout will be glad to consider your ideas for revision. Or at least I've found it so.

Bundy: That is true in most of the new agencies. But recently I had an experience with a complete layout—a comprehensive. A young artist in the agency had sketched in the figures badly—with the arm going the wrong way, and you couldn't do anything about it. The type was printed in all around the drawing. (This layout and his solving of the problem were humorously demonstrated by Bundy with charcoal and paper.)

## Fun and Inspiration

Crowninshield: How much fun is there in doing commercial art?

Or is that something that only comes to illustrators?

Williamson thought it could have some amusement injected in it, but that one must remember the advertising business is a matter of selling products; it must be considered as a practical proposition.

Crowninshield: Where do young people get their influence—or inspiration? How far back do they go? Do they read the background and study the works of great painters, or do they look around at the painters today?

Bundy: For me it is mostly derived from the old boys. I have a special passion for the old Impressionists in France. The people I admire most are Lautrec—I use him up to a certain extent; his lines are expressive and decorate a page; for down to earth painting I go to Degas and Goya. It seems to me things in the magazines today should live up to some of that work. It's a shame that present-day work should be behind that of men who have been dead for 50 years.

Bundy thinks there is too much "pap" being done in illustration in this country. It seems to him the medium and technics should be developed, should be stronger. He is firmly convinced that "We'll all be surprised into the poorhouse one of these days by some bunch of young guys who will use an 'old' medium that will be very fine and very strong and that will wake us all up."

## On Technic

Crowninshield: What of technical difficulties, of learning to handle your special medium? I know of course that young artists have to go through a long period of travail, hardship and study. But how much of your success is due to technical ability and how much to personality?

Williamson: If you're working for the *New Yorker* mentality and personality are more important than technic; James Thurber being a good example. As a whole, though, I think technic is ahead of mentality—which is deplorable. However, this—like the overflow of photographic illustrations—makes the very clever man's illustrations even more outstanding. Too many art directors look for technic first of all, and if the technic does not meet a certain standard they refuse to consider the work.

Crowninshield said that critics agree that America has turned out good artists. It was interesting to note, however, that Homer was a bad illustrator. He was detailed to illustrate the Civil War and he sent back very poor drawings. There were plenty of illustrators who were better. Homer tried to please the editors of *Harper's*, and the public; but finally got fed up with the whole thing. He decided that he was going to discover Winslow Homer! He sold everything in his studio for \$1,500 and went to stay

with his sister who was ill in Scarborough. There he painted Indians and animals and snow storms—anything he wished to paint. He was 46 years old when he really discovered Winslow Homer.

## Flavor

Williamson: Why is Eakins famous, even though he was so realistic—almost photographic in his work?

Crowninshield: Eakins has flavor.

Williamson: How does one get flavor?

Crowninshield: You have to be born with it... My father was an artist (worked in stained glass). He complained of the way artists went at their painting. If they decided to paint an old lady, they put her in a chair and proceeded to reproduce her, without imagination. My father thought an artist should say, "I'm going to paint tragedy in that old woman"; and approach his canvas in the mood for it; or, "I'm going to paint her as the liveliest old girl ever."

Someone in the audience asked Wallace Morgan to take the platform. He did, saying that he had been very much interested in the discussion of the difference between clothes (fashion) and life. He felt that this was a very important thing to be watched by illustrators. He also referred to Mr. Bundy's feeling about photographs and models "getting in the way." He championed this sentiment—as one of the small group that does not employ models. Mr. Morgan said he has a file of clippings that he often hopes to use—but can never find the right one at the right time. Occasionally when he gets stuck he goes to his cabinet and pulls out some "scrap" but invariably the figure is turned the wrong way. Next time he is drawing with his figures facing the opposite direction he remembers the offending clipping, fishes for it—but, in his cabinet, "the darn things turn the wrong way, overnight."

## Paging the Art Director

Treidler brought up another question. He said recently he had submitted some drawings for approval and they were to be passed upon by a number of executives. He was concerned to find that the A.D.'s initials were not even on some of his pictures—meaning that the art director, whose judgment he respects, was not given a chance to appraise the work.

Bundy: Often the A.D. doesn't even look at your drawings when you turn them in, he hustles them off to see if they are to be accepted by the account executive and others. I don't think the proper use is made of art directors' abilities in many instances.

## A Stock Question

Question from audience—the old standby: Did the boys go to art school?

Bundy: I had three months in Chicago when I was 15.

Williamson: I drew for 15 hours a day from the day I was 4—it became a nervous habit.

Mr. Treidler said the artist has got to find out—at art school, or through training himself—how to draw, how to handle his tools and how to discipline himself.

Mr. Williamson thought everyone should go to art school for a while at least. It took him 10 years to learn things he feels he could have picked up in a few months in art schools.

## The Camera Again

From audience (unidentified illustrator): If da Vinci and Michelangelo had been able to do so, I'm sure they would have used the camera. I see nothing wrong in an artist using photographs in the right way. However, he must be independent of the photograph and make it a servant—never let it be his master.

Crowninshield: When Michelangelo did his David with every sinew, every muscle, it was a magnificent performance. No such thing as photography was known then. He had to be his own camera; there were no charts. Corot in the 60's, Degas in the 70's was excited about the use of photography. It was in '95 that the Kodak was invented. As soon as the camera came into general usage, the artists who had faithfully reproduced their subjects were ridiculed and called "photographers." The artists discovered that there was no sense in drawing exact images because the camera recorded things so much more accurately. In time the camera created an entirely new kind of draftsmanship—and in some instances it has been good for the artist.

Treidler: Of course we all know that a lot of the old boys who are our heroes in art had various mechanical means which compare with our modern use of the camera. Leonardo really started the whole thing with his camera obscura—a darkened room with a small aperture in one wall—corresponding to our camera lens—through which the subject was projected into the dark room.

What Ingre did is interesting, too. His work was divided into two groups: first, the drawings he made from models—where he felt for a line; second, those that he made from tracing or from photographs. In his family groups, which were made before the camera, the technic is definitely that of some sort of tracing. He may have used the technic of placing the model 6 or 8 feet from a plate glass panel, then putting his tracing paper upon the glass. I have heard that he often set a frame in front of his model, with wires across the frame, then marked his canvas in the same way.

Well, this subject of the camera seems to come up every time we meet here. It shows a lot of interest in the matter—and perhaps it's a good note to end on.

## 1941 Series

Norman Rockwell will start the 1941 "Talks on Illustration." The date has not yet been decided; but the new series will be announced in the February issue of *AMERICAN ARTIST*.





*Portrait of  
Lester Jay Loh  
President of  
The Art Directors Club*

*Drawing by  
Oberhardt*



What is an art director like? Those living in the Metropolitan area will have at least a partial answer in an exhibition of playtime work to be held by the Art Directors Club at the New York School of Applied Design for Women, 160 Lexington Avenue, from January 7th to 21st. There you will see drawings, watercolors, oil paintings, photographs, books and certain objects of design. What is done with his spare time tells a lot about a man. Perhaps illustrators who submit their drawings to these art directors will here learn something to their advantage.

An additional feature of the show, because it is the first event in the Club's calendar in the celebration of its twentieth anniversary, will be all of William Oberhardt's drawings of former Club Presidents—a graphic treat in itself. The Art Directors Club Annual of Advertising Art will be out at about the same time. So says Georges Wilmet, chairman of the book committee. He

promises that "it will be in many respects a radical departure from the volumes that have preceded it. Both the shape of book and the layout of its contents have been revised and redesigned. The catalogue aspect of the annual has been changed to that of an illustrated book. The illustrative material has been enhanced with articles written by advertising men, art directors, illustrators, poster artists, designers and photographers."

Speaking of Oberhardt's portraits (he himself is a member of our Club), there have been three separate Oberhardt articles in *AMERICAN ARTIST*. In February 1939 Matlack Price wrote a fine biographical sketch of "Obie." In March of the same year Obie made a special demonstration portrait for the magazine, with a photographer at hand to make a step-by-step record of its progress. And the following May he wrote a highly instructive article on "Design, the Cornerstone of Pictorial Illustration."



## BRITAIN DELIVERS THE GOODS . . . . .

Since the outbreak of War in Europe, we have received many inquiries as to our ability to keep customers supplied with Winsor & Newton products due to War conditions in England where these products are manufactured.

We can assure our customers that, although there have been occasional delays in completing orders, we are nevertheless receiving regular shipments from England and have had no advice of any shortage of material. Consequently, we believe that we will be able to maintain supplies for an indefinite period.

In confirmation of the above statement, we would point out that out of eighty-four shipments despatched to us from England since the outbreak of War, we have lost only one and we think this record speaks for itself.

**Winsor & Newton, Inc.** 31 UNION SQUARE WEST,  
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(MANUFACTURED BY WINSOR & NEWTON LTD.  
AT WEALDSTONE, ENGLAND)

That teachers and students of printing, layout, advertising art, etc., will find this book of great value is evidenced by the receipt of an initial order for 150 copies from a single art school. Many professionals will buy it as a convenient reference. Its easel form will simplify its use and save valuable desk space. Order your copy NOW!

**\$2.50**



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WILLIAM LONGYEAR, Head of the Department of Advertising Art, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, N. Y., and nationally known designer for commerce and industry, has here produced a volume filling a very real need among art directors, advertising designers, layout men, letterers, etc., for an up-to-the-minute type specimen book. It contains 145 single line specimens of type faces in common use, making it easy to become acquainted with them. Also a selection of 58 single line specimens of antique and exotic types such as have lately been revived, and 80 pages devoted to 90 complete alphabets, with numerals, most of them reproduced in several sizes. Included are pages of rules and decorative material, and examples of printed matter. Also proofreading marks, definitions of printing terms, explanation of point system, and instruction on lettering and layout.

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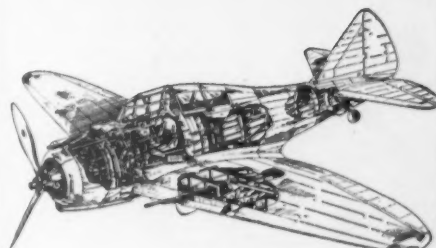
The experience gained by working in competition with others and the awards when you win them are invaluable aids in helping you get work after graduation or entrance to advanced schools.

Ask your teacher about the Chas. M. Higgins Memorial Awards, today.



**HIGGINS** CHAS. M. HIGGINS & CO., INC.  
271 NINTH STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

FOR AMERICA'S DEFENSE: Project No. 1 in the Mechanical Drawing Division is dedicated to this subject that should be foremost in the mind of every mechanical drawing student today. Illustration courtesy of Aviation Magazine and The Republic Aviation Corporation.



# An Artist Looks at the Art Service

BY FRED FREEMAN

Every workaday morning, several thousand well-dressed cosmopolitan gentlemen set out to make their rounds, some with large leather cases, others with brown paper packages, and the really elite with a perspiring messenger carrying his load of samples at a respectful distance aft. They are the purveyors of art as we make it. While we sit hunched over our boards like so many moles in our various crannies, these art service salesmen are contacting our customers. Day after day they make the rounds. For every call that we make, they make ten. They are our front men, and they speak for the trade, the whole trade. Whether or not you do business with an agent or an art service makes no difference, these gentlemen are still the front men for the profession as a whole. What is being said of us is what they say. Our problems are being solved as they solve them. Maybe not each and every problem, but the formula for solving problems is in the hands of these front men as they establish them. The basis on which we work is also in the hands of these men, for whether or not you work for an art service, you are still in competition with it, and whether you like it or not, you've got to meet that competition.

With this in view, it would certainly behoove us to examine these responsible creatures with considerable care. I am firmly convinced that the function that they serve is an important one, and that they are doing a good job in the field in which they operate to the extent to which they are able. But I also believe that the field in which they operate is a field which needs to be strengthened substantially both from the point of view of the artist, and particularly from the point of view of the art director. Leaving aside agents who operate with a small staff of their own free-lance men, let us take a look at the average art service and see how it affects the free-lance artist.

But before taking that up I shall digress a moment to consider the background. Originally, the art service was a catalogue house. Its purpose was to prepare the stuffing for great mail order establishments and such like. An art director desiring to buy a drawing for his advertisement, bought it directly from the artist, not through an art service. Advertising art in those days was done by fine artists and lithographers. There was no such thing either as an advertising artist or as advertising art training. In those days, the prestige of the art director was tremendous. He was

the go-between for art and business. He was the man who actually "knew" the artists and could get them to "prostitute their art" for advertising. Most of us came considerably after that day, but it existed none the less, and the fall in prestige which the art director has suffered is what has been largely responsible for bringing the art service to its present state. Whether the art service was responsible for the loss of prestige of the art director, or whether the art director was responsible for the gain in

bility is two-edged in that to a considerable extent it also relieves him of his prestige.

And now for a point by point appraisal of the art service.

1.

The art service is probably the greatest training school for young artists that could possibly be imagined. There are very few successful free-lancers who have not reaped the benefit of some service training.

But

Although the art service trains new artists, because they are new artists, the art service is enabled to take 50% of the pay which they receive. This in itself is not wrong, but it established the so-called 50% practice, which is rotten. It is rotten because it has made out of the production of art a commission business. If a large art service can honestly take 50% from an artist even though he is starting in, there is no reason why all art services cannot demand the same from all but a few artists. This has brought into the field a bunch of commission merchants—people with no previous knowledge of the art of advertising—who are drawn into this field because no other field will pay such a high percentage. This does not include many who are well qualified and who are faithful friends of the artist. But this pernicious 50% racket has made it increasingly difficult for artists to get work at any less than 50%. Where before this the standard fee was 25%, it is now anywhere between 25% and 50%, depending on the ability of the artist as a horse trader. Either the advertiser is getting a job from an artist who is worth only half of what the job is worth, or the artist is doing the job for only half of what the job is worth. Somebody is getting stung. The art service justifies this by saying that it will guide the artist and build the drawing to where it is worth full value to the agency. In this case, what is the art director being paid for, and isn't the advertiser paying an art director to pay a service to pay an artist, when the art director should be able to do the very thing the service is doing, and for half as much? The fact that an art service has to get that much in order to operate, is not only economically unsound, but unjustified from the point of view of the agency and the artist.

2.

The art service provides for the art student that all-important step between art school and a real place in the field of advertising. It provides jobs for stu-

*continued on page 32*

## The Guild Page



On this page each month the ARTISTS GUILD, Inc., 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, will present information relative to conditions in the art market and will discuss the steps taken by the Guild to protect the artist's interests. Pres., Harry T. Fisk, Vice Pres., Warren Baumgartner, Sec'y, Earle B. Winslow, Treas., George Rupprecht.

prestige of the service, is a question like that of the hen and the egg. Which came first?

There are other contributing factors which are important. When commercial art became a specialized career, its purchase ceased to be so delicate a matter, and when the art service came into being, commercial art which had always been a product which was "bought" now became a product which was "sold" to a certain degree. Another factor to be considered is the further division of the advertising dollar. The art director's prestige was at its height when the largest proportion of the advertising dollar was spent for advertising art. Today, the advertising dollar is split up into radio, research, publicity, sky writing, moving pictures, prizes, testimonials, and whiskey sours. The art director's prestige was divided in like manner, and his importance is in ratio to the importance of his department in his particular agency.

This above all else is what is most important to the artist and the art director. Today the art director leans heavily on the art service for a great deal of the work which he buys, because he can ill afford to make mistakes. The art services can and do absorb their mistakes. In fact, the art service today can and does guarantee to come as close as is humanly possible to covering all mistakes of the art director and the account man, as well as their own. This quality of relieving the art director of responsi-



# American Artist in the Classroom

"ENLARGE THE STUDENT'S BACKGROUND and you will bring him in contact with the art of our times and make him conscious of standards of excellence in conception and technic." Thus writes Cordelia M. Perkins, Head of the Allied Arts Department of Phoenix Union High Schools and Junior College of Phoenix, Arizona.

"We have used AMERICAN ARTIST for this type of study and with marked success," continues Mrs. Perkins. "Making use of the magazine, students have rapidly developed increased skill in expressing their own ideas creatively and with power for good both in school and community."

AMERICAN ARTIST has become an im-

portant teaching tool in many of America's high schools and colleges. Each year since its founding as ART INSTRUCTION in 1937, Phoenix Union has ordered fifty subscriptions for use in its art classes, one of the largest single school orders. Because, as Mrs. Perkins says, "the individual need for expression can and should be connected with the main current of life," Phoenix's progressive art department seeks its inspiration first hand, from creative artists whose philosophy, work and written words appear monthly in AMERICAN ARTIST.

Education at Phoenix — the largest high school west of the Mississippi — under the leadership of Superintendent E. W. Montgomery and a faculty of 152 teachers is scaled to the breadth of contemporary horizons.

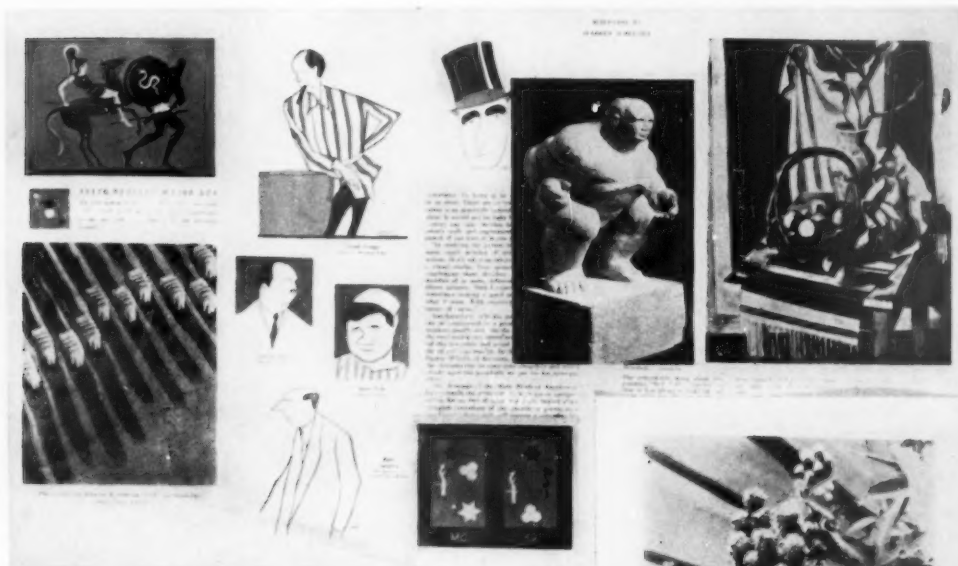
"We believe," says Mrs. Perkins, "that creative art has a real place in present day education. Emerging from its 'splendid isolation,' art has entered the home, the city, and the community at large. It has become democratic in that many, and not the privileged few, may share its blessings. For that very reason, art must consider the average person's attitude, his feelings, and his limitations. But such art must show a certain amount of skill and beauty

to hold the interest of the average high school student. Too much emphasis on technic may kill the spark before it is more than a flicker. Yet, given proper encouragement and guidance, the student who is allowed free expression in art may become dissatisfied enough with poor draftsmanship to seek higher standards.

"The old school sadly over-emphasized technics, and the fact that many in recent years have given 'technic' no attention may indicate the about-face trends toward new forms of expression, tolerance for a wide variety of taste and new ideas."

Recently we wrote to Mrs. Perkins asking just how AMERICAN ARTIST is

used in her art department. Her comments quoted above are from her reply. From the many photographs sent us we reproduce the two exhibits shown herewith. These show how specific articles in the magazine stimulated student experiments in design, sculpture and humorous illustration. The horizontal chart is a paste-up of clippings from magazine pages. The vertical panel reproduces student work based upon these articles. Sculpture by Warren Wheelock, caricature by William Auerbach-Levy and a design article by Maitland Graves inspired these particular studies. The photograph on the back cover was taken in one of the school studios by a student of photography in the Art Department.



Phoenix Union High Schools and Junior College of Phoenix, Arizona, sends these two exhibits to show how definitely AMERICAN ARTIST serves as a teaching tool in their art classes





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Oldest fine arts schools in America. (Est. 1805.) Complete professional training. Painting, sculpture (stone cutting), illustration, mural painting. Also coordinated course with U. of P., B.F.A. degree. Scholarships, other prizes. Distinguished faculty. Catalog.

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January 15—March 1, 1941

Write Mrs. Gerry Polce, Governor's Corner, Tucson, Ariz.

SUMMER—Goose Rocks Beach, Maine

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STUDIO S, 75 E. WACKER DR., CHICAGO

dents, some of them as mat boys and runners, and it does train them to become good artists. By concentrated effort it develops individual artists who might otherwise take years to arrive, or never come on at all. Certainly no one can kick about this, and in that the service gets a loud cheer.

### Yes

It is admitted that art services do develop individual artists. In fact, big services develop them so fast that for every John Whitcomb or Earl Oliver Hurst, there are 250 perfectly dandy imitators. This is good or bad, depending on which team you happen to play; very sad for the artist who has developed something and the advertiser who bought the original. Another bad practice in this connection is the substitution of one artist for another in the case of a job not being used. In many cases, the art service protects the buyer of the job by substituting another artist in place of the first and in doing the job over and billing for only one drawing. This bill is then split 50% to the first artist on a fifty-fifty basis (which means he gets 25%), 50% to the second artist (which means he also gets 25%), while the art service itself gets 25% of each drawing, or a total of 50% on the whole deal.

### 3.

The art service can cover the field more often with the artist's work than the artist himself could possibly cover the field.

### But

The average art service salesman carries the work of from five to twenty-five men. Being human, he carries very little of each, since no one likes a heavy kit. This means that art directors who have for years seen your work sandwiched in between fifteen others, will tell you the first time you bring a full kit of your own work that they have never seen your work before.

### 4.

It provides the only type of expert co-operative craftsmanship which can successfully put together complex technical matter, as in the case of advertisements which carry diversified elements. A tire ad involving retouching, scratchboard, main illustration, logotype, lettering—and two headaches—is a good example.

### Certainly

It is true that the art service provides the only shop where complicated assemblies can be made, and complicated advertisements produced, and this is their true function. The art service has a definite job to perform. It is economically a sound institution. It is the only outfit that can do its own kind of job and the art service should stick to its last. If the art service produced only jobs of this specialized nature, the first result would be to weed out the commission merchants because of their fundamental

lack of experience in a technical field. It would increase the importance of the art director, because his would then become the responsibility for dealing directly with the artist and in all other cases himself seeing that a job was properly done.

### 5.

The majority of services have experts, with long training, who can follow an ad from its glorious natal day in some account executive's head until it becomes a real machine for selling merchandise.

### No doubt about it

The art services have a definite function. Only their people can do their specific type of job. Why not let them stick to that job?

### 6.

The majority of services are very generous with their artists, not only advancing money on work which is in progress, but often carrying a man until he is on his feet.

### This appeals!

A hungry artist can certainly appreciate this. But he should remember that security usually has a price.

This ability and readiness to advance money to the artist is probably the service's strongest coercive hold. It places the service immediately in an excellent bargaining position. It makes it difficult for an artist to leave the service, and encourages him to depend on the service instead of himself. It is true that the artist cannot budget his income, because it fluctuates, but it is also true that in this the service weakens his initiative and self-reliance.

### 7.

The service provides a convenient meeting place for out-of-town buyers and offers these buyers expert advice and help in finding artists and in procuring whatever the buyers require.

### Granted

The art service does find a meeting place for the out-of-town buyers, and for that matter for all buyers. This it should do, and it is entitled to a fee for so doing. The abuse of this privilege has been in the service's assumption that the out-of-town buyer and all buyers are their clients and not the clients of the artist. The service is entitled to a fee for making a contact and for being in a position to make that contact, but a 25% fee would certainly seem ample for introducing client and artist. Furthermore one contact does not endow a life investment in the artist's earnings to that service. An art director should be free, after the contact has been made, to work directly with the artist or through the service, whichever is more convenient.

### 8.

Finally, the gentlemen who run art services, for the most part, have a good understanding of the nature of the artist and try within the limits of "good

## CARTOONING



For those wishing practical, personal instruction in this branch of the arts by an experienced cartoonist, I offer a home study course recommended by America's foremost cartoonists. A postal card brings full details.

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business" (the week-day religion) to serve them capably.

Just so

It is true that the gentlemen who run services have a good understanding of the artists whom they serve. Artists, like other professional men, spend most of their time at their boards. Their energies are devoted to the production of something useful. They are entitled to the help of a business agent. That is the function of the art service with which they do business. Their preoccupation with their work makes it essential that the service thus invested take no advantage of them. Matters of financial integrity, exploitation of the artists' hours, and giving super and unnecessary service in order to beat competition, are temptations which fall in the way of art service salesmen, whose hours are devoted to ways and means of getting work. It is safe to say, and can easily be proved, that the ridiculous pressure put upon artists to produce work in an outrageously short time has been encouraged, fostered, and in every way furthered by art services and salesmen of those services who desire to give more "service" than their competitor.

There is one last thing which we all should remember. The dependence of the art director on the art service has served not to increase his prestige, but to decrease it. If this tendency continues, it will foster the growth of tremendous art brokerages. It will mean that artists will find it increasingly difficult to get work directly from the advertising agencies. Let us remember that although art services promise to cover the mistakes of agencies, they can only do it at the expense of their artists. Jobs which are bought and not used for one reason or another can be absorbed by art services only in the final analysis if the artist absorbs them. Settlements for bills, discounts, changes in work, or any kind of service, can only be given if the artist gives it. The bad part of the situation from the artist's point of view is that an art service can make such a settlement on the basis of a promise for further work and pass on the loss to the artist who did the job in question; but the promised work may be passed on to somebody else within the service, so that, although an artist may make a settlement and absorb the loss, the service keeps the account and gets the additional business promised to offset this loss. I can give specific proof of this practice wherein the artist suffering the loss has received not one dime's worth of the additional business from the service.

The above is the most honest case I can make for the art service. If I have left out any advantages it has been unintentional.

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The many users of Winsor & Newton materials will be glad to note from this company's advertisement this month that despite the war they have been receiving regular shipments from England, only one shipment out of eighty-four having been lost.

## MULLER ENGRAVING TOOLS

Ever since 1898 Edward C. Muller, 61-3 Frankfort Street, New York, N. Y., has been manufacturing tools for wood engraving, etching, linoleum block printing, photo-engraving, etc. Not only are these tools ideal for their intended purpose, but artists find that many of them can be successfully adapted to other uses. For example, lining tools which are meant for the photo-engraver are capable of highly interesting results when employed on scratchboard. It will be recalled that these tools were mentioned by Joseph DiGemma in his article "Multiple Tool Wood Engraving" in AMERICAN ARTIST for May, 1940.

## HANDCRAFT CATALOG

From the Western Manufacturing Company, 149-153 Ninth St., San Francisco, California, the mailman brings a catalog of tools, supplies, raw materials, projects and suggestions in handcraft. Among the subjects covered are Leathercraft, Braiding and Knotting, Upholstery Craft, Cork and Costume Craft, Wood Carving and Burning, Block Printing, Metalcraft, Catalin Craft, Clay and Beadcraft, Indian Materials, Webbing Supplies, etc. Ask for catalog A32.

## MASKED PENCIL TEST

The Eagle Pencil Company, 703 E. 13th Street, New York, N. Y., has invited our readers, for a limited period, to make its "Masked Pencil Test" of strength, smoothness and wear. Merely write to the company, mentioning AMERICAN ARTIST, and asking for a free sample pencil (be sure to give your favorite degree of hardness) and a pair of metal masks, together with directions. The company would also appreciate your including the name of your regular drawing pencil dealer.

## WAYMAN ADAMS PAINTING A PORTRAIT

This 16 mm. silent film in Kodachrome Color should be particularly interesting to our readers in view of our article "Wayman Adams Paints a Portrait" in AMERICAN ARTIST (then ART INSTRUCTION) for June, 1939. This full-length film, said to be the first of its kind, is based on the painting by Mr. Adams of a portrait of Morris Gest, famous producer of dramatic spectacles. This instructive and entertaining film is offered by its sponsors, the firm of M. Grumbacher, 470 West 34th Street, New York City, without cost (except transportation) for a showing in professional art schools, museums, and accredited art organizations. For particulars address Michael M. Engel of that company.

Joseph Cummings Chase, Portrait Painter, and Head of Art Department, Hunter College, New York, offers the following comments: "The showing of the Wayman Adams film was a great success. Our art students packed the auditorium and watched excitedly the rapid achievement of the portrait painter; it was a splendid lesson for our young painters. It is a particularly excellent color film—both Starkweather and I made remarks during the showing of the film, calling to the attention of the students certain points we were eager for them not to miss."

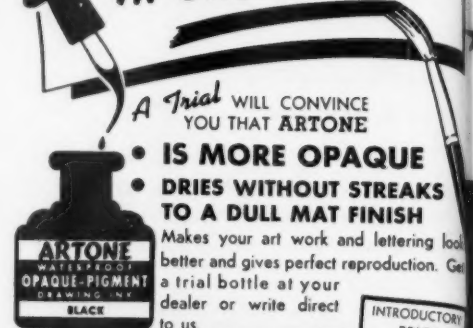
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